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(Coleman, S.)

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MEMOIRS

OF

DOCTOR SETH COLEMAN, A. M.

OF

AMHERST, (MASS.)

CONTAINING

- I. A Biographical Sketch of his Life and Character.
- II. Extracts from his Journal, taken by himself.
- III. His Letters upon Religious Subjects.
- IV. His Farewell Address to his Children.
- V. Sermon delivered at his Funeral, by the Rev.
NATHAN PERKINS.

"The memory of the just is blessed."

PROV. x. 7.

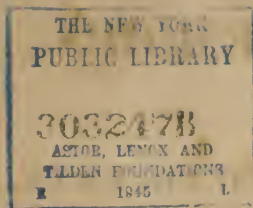
"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

REV. xiv. 13.

NEW-HAVEN,
PRINTED BY FLAGG & GRAY, at the Herald Office, State-street.

.....

1817.



To the
CHILDREN and FAMILY FRIENDS
of
DOCTOR COLEMAN,
These Memoirs,
Compiled at their request,
and from a filial regard to his memory,
Are affectionately
and respectfully
inscribed, by
THE COMPILER.

District of Connecticut.....ss.

(Seal)

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-sixth day of January, in the forty-second year of the Independence of the United States of America, **ELIPHALET B. COLEMAN**, of the said district, hath deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:—

“Memoirs of Doctor Seth Coleman, A. M. of Amherst, (Mass.) containing, I. A Biographical Sketch of his Life and Character. II. Extracts from his Journal, taken by himself. III. His Letters upon Religious Subjects. IV. His Farewell Address to his Children V. Sermon delivered at his Funeral, by the Rev. Nathan Perkins. “*The memory of the just is blessed*” Prov. x. 7. “*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*” Rev. xiv. 13.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.”

R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,
R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

THE HISTORY OF

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
FROM THE FOUNDATION
OF THE CITY
TO THE PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN STOW
1597

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INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH the reality and excellence of vital religion has, in every age, been exemplified in the lives and deaths of eminent Christians, yet the pen of genius has seldom been attracted to the delineation of Christian character. It has chosen rather to celebrate the praises of human worth and human glory. Hence Poets, Orators, and Historians, have always vied with each other, in enthusiastic descriptions of the intrepidity, valour, magnanimity, and exalted virtue of heroes; the illustrious feats, the brilliant accomplishments, and the deep penetration of the great, and honourable, and learned of the world: While that conduct, those principles and motives, those virtues and graces, which originate from Heaven, and eventually raise the soul to a crown of righteousness and a throne of glory, are left for the admiration of persons of less distinction and supposed inferior taste.

Agreeable to the declaration of Scripture, that "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," the charms

of Christian character have been generally unnoticed, or resisted, by the great men of the world. When united with the appendages of human honour, religion has indeed been respected and applauded in the higher circles; but when viewed in the more humble walks of life, it has usually been mistaken for a weak and despicable fanaticism. Hence it is, that those exercises of heart, which the exalted spirits of heaven, and the Supreme Author of all goodness and greatness view with complacence and delight, are too often regarded only with aversion and contempt. This accords with the declaration of the Apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But as it pleases God, in making "foolish the wisdom of this world," to impart divine grace to those in common life, so that grace may be honoured, and the cause of Christ benefited, by the publication of their piety, when it has been signal, and afforded many good and important examples for imitation. In no case ought records of religious experience to be made for the applause of the creature, however distinguished his Christian attainments, but to magnify and extol that divine grace which gave him this distinction. This object, the compiler cannot but fondly hope and trust, will be in some measure answered, by a review of Doct. Coleman's Life, as exhibited in

this volume. In examining his writings, to judge of the expediency of publishing, it was thought, notwithstanding the many publications of this kind, and the similarity, usually, of Christian experience in private life, that they presented such evidence of ardent piety, of intimate communion with God, and of high attainment in the divine life, that, to the gratification of family friends, might be added, the expectation of more extensive usefulness. And besides, it is believed, that the power of religion on the mind, in producing elevation of thought, and grandeur of aim, is more plainly seen in the humble, than in the higher walks of life; and a fairer comparison drawn between man in his natural state, and when renewed by divine grace. Here it is clearly discerned, that the latter rises far above the former, not only in point of happiness of heart, but enlargedness of mind and elevation of soul. And not until it is found, that some other than the principles of the Gospel, produce disinterested aims at the glory of God, in all the common actions of life; growing conformity to his will and perfections; satisfaction and contentment in any situation of life, however low; quiet submission and resignation to the providences of God, however afflictive; habitual benevolence, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness; comparative contempt of the enjoyments of time, and support and triumph in death; will it be conceded, that religion is not the highest attainment of which the

soul of man is capable. But this point has long since been established. And if a perusal of the following pages might be blessed, to the excitement of any to seek this noblest attainment, and to the edification, encouragement and perseverance of any who have already chosen the good part, the highest object of the compiler will be answered.

A SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
DOCT. SETH COLEMAN.



DOCTOR COLEMAN was born of respectable and pious parents, at Hatfield, Massachusetts, March 17th, 1740. When he was two years old, his parents removed to Amherst, where they continued through life. In consequence of their faithful religious instructions, the subject of this sketch was seriously impressed in his early youth. The operations of the Holy Spirit were very powerful upon his mind at several times: and having been educated in the belief that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance, and that all who are seriously disposed ought to join the church, he accordingly made a profession at the age of eighteen: of the impropriety of this practice he afterwards became fully convinced. In the twenty-first year of his age, after a course of the most pungent convictions, he was hopefully born into the

kingdom of Christ, experiencing peculiar joy and peace in believing, and having clear and distinguishing views of divine things. His succeeding long life of devotedness to God, has well attested the genuineness of his conversion. The testimony of his acquaintance, especially, of those most intimate with him, concur in the declaration, that few men have led a more exemplary life of uniform and ardent piety. At the age of twenty-one, he entered Yale College, and graduated, September, 1765. He studied the profession of physic with Doct. Hubbard, of New-Haven; during which time he married Miss Sarah Beecher, a young woman of distinguished piety. After the attainment of his profession, they removed to Amherst, where he continued through life, a respectable practitioner of physic. His marriage connexion proved a source of mutual spiritual improvement; it being the highest aim of both to advance in the divine life. But happiness, or usefulness in earthly connexions, is no security for their continuance. And she, having exhibited an example of uncommon faith, and prayer, and holy living, and a striking manifestation of Christian composure, resignation and triumph in death, was taken from him at the age of 43; having been the mother of eight children; five of whom survived her, and are yet living.

Jan. 27th, 1785, he was married to Mrs. Eunice Warner, of Hadley, who survives him.

In delineating Doct. Coleman's character as

a Christian, it seems insufficient to say, in general terms, he was a pious man. By the grace of God, he made rare attainments in faith and holiness. He had a deep, heart-felt sense of partaking with others in human depravity; but its evil effects were, in a high degree, subverted by that heaven-born principle of holy love, which divine grace had implanted in his heart, and which evidently actuated him in all the concerns and relations of life, and produced that uniformity of character which constitutes the beauty of holiness. His religion was the experience of the heart, diffusing itself through all the life. The bent of his mind appeared in his readiness to convert every thing to religious use. Every object of his attention was made subservient to spiritual improvement. Things, which a mere speculative mind would notice only with curiosity, always furnished him with materials for devout reflection.

He was of a retiring, contemplative turn, but also communicative and active in the cause of religion; zealous and experimental, but without bitterness and enthusiasm; mild and candid, without coldness and indifference; serious, but cheerful; high in religious attainment, but humble, and most charitably condescending towards others.

He was peculiarly attentive to the intimations of Divine Providence. In his personal concerns he uniformly studied its leadings with the most scrupulous attention, and cheerful acquiescence, that filial love could dictate.

Nothing seemed necessary to determine the course of his procedure, but a knowledge of his heavenly Father's will. And though his conduct, in this respect, may be regarded by the unregenerate as the superstition of a weak mind; yet the children of God cannot fail to admire it, as a charming trait of Christian character. Indeed, in proportion as the influence of true love and obedience to their Father in heaven, is felt in their own hearts, they will bless God for such a grace in their brethren.

He was eminently a man of prayer; both in respect to his faith in the duty, and his faithful performance of it. He seemed to go to his heavenly Father with the filial confidence of a child, expecting and looking for an answer. And so distinct and peculiar were many which he received, that no one, except an infidel, could doubt their reality. But I would not trouble the reader with a recital of them in this place, and shall only notice one, as an example. After the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, in an awakening in Amherst in 1803, for the promotion of which he had been very earnest, he expressed a confident belief to some of his friends, that he should live to witness a great display of Almighty power and grace among that people. A few years after, the place was again visited with the special operations of the Spirit; and the particular friends to whom he had before expressed his faith, congratulated him, supposing that his

expectations were fully realized. He united in the joy, but observed, that the secret assurances which he had received from that God, who hears and answers prayer, were not yet fulfilled; and that if he was not deceived as to the reality of those assurances, he should live to see greater things than these. And though no revival of religion appeared until after he was severely threatened with death by repeated shocks of the palsy, yet he uniformly maintained his prediction. A few weeks before his death, to his great joy, he realized his hopes, and the gracious answer of a faithful God to his prayers. A powerful shower of divine grace refreshed the two churches in the town, and added in one day ninety to their number. The hopeful subjects were about a hundred and fifty. This irradiated his entrance to the vale of death, and he seemed, like Simeon of old, to say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

His deep concern for the salvation of his children, was manifested by the most faithful course of religious instruction, and an earnest spirit of prayer for them. And for an addition to the many encouragements to faithfulness in prayer, it may not be unprofitable or improper to mention, that he had the happiness of seeing all his children and their partners professors, and the most of his grand-children hopeful possessors of the religion of Jesus. By his writings it appears, that in the latter part of his

life he became convinced, that praying for his children collectively, did not answer the demands of duty : he therefore made a resolution, to go to the throne of grace for them separately twice a day in secret, while he lived. And it is confidently believed, that this resolution was faithfully kept for the last thirteen years of his life.

His punctual attendance on the public worship of God, evinced his love for that service. He was never absent from the house of God on the Sabbath, except when personal illness, or an attention to professional duties, did not render it absolutely necessary. And his appearance in the sanctuary, uniformly denoted the engagedness of his whole heart. The preaching which he most admired, was that which exhibited the doctrines of grace in the clearest and plainest manner, and was the most directly calculated to affect the hearts and consciences of sinners.

As a Deacon in Christ's church, which office he held for more than thirty years, he manifested the same conscientious fidelity, that marked the performance of all his duties ; and by his zeal for the purity, order and discipline of God's house, gave full evidence of being justly numbered with those, who, "by using the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

His decided preference and love for religious company and conversation, was, also,

very apparent. He never seemed so much in his element, as when conversing with experienced Christians upon the things of the kingdom of God. He was, indeed, free and cheerful in conversation upon general subjects; but always discovered a desire to divert discourse, from worldly topics, to subjects of religion.


In respect to doctrines, it may be sufficient, without particularizing, to say, that he was a firm believer in those, which are usually styled, the doctrines of the reformation; and was zealous for the defence and prevalence of evangelical truth.

The efficacy of religion in cheering the prospect of death, was not less satisfactorily illustrated in his experience, than its peace, and joy, and consolation in life. As it had enabled him to meet with quiet composure, and Christian resignation, the many trials and afflictions of life; so it eminently removed all fears of death. He even appeared, for a number of his last years, to be preparing for it, as an event which he anticipated with satisfaction.—It is very observable, that irreligious people are averse to the contemplation of death.—They consider it as an evil day, and put the thoughts of it far from them. But it was far otherwise with him. He seemed indeed more ready to converse upon this subject, than any other; the thoughts of dying and entering the invisible world, having been long familiar to his mind. Nor was a preparation for this solemn event delayed until the summons arrived;

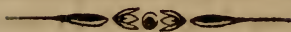
but, in the midst of health and active labours, he began to set his house in order for his departure. And as the spiritual good of his children lay with deep interest on his heart, his first step was to leave with them his parental instruction, counsels and admonitions. For this purpose, therefore, he convened them in his seventieth year, and delivered the Farewell Address contained in these pages. He now began the arrangement of his temporal concerns, which he nearly completed before his first shock of the palsy. This, he said, was a premonition to be ready ; and in obedience to the call, he appeared to trim his lamp, and gird up the loins of his mind ; and for many months before his decease, seemed patiently and cheerfully waiting for his summons of departure. To some of his particular friends, he several times observed, that, whenever he went to sleep, he did not know that he had any choice in which world he awoke ; but if any, it was to awake in another. Nor was it for a moment to be doubted, whether his tranquillity upon the subject arose from an experimental preparation for his change, or from that callousness of feeling, which a constant attendance upon the sick and dying is apt to produce in an unregenerate heart. His tenderness and sympathy in these distressing scenes, was very obvious, from his faithful exertions for the spiritual, as well as bodily health of his patients. He was always ready for the performance of those services to the sick and dying,

which are usually expected from persons of a different profession. It was too evident to admit of doubt, that his willingness to die arose from a well tried faith and hope in the Lord Jesus. And this faith and hope seemed not in the least shaken, at the near approach of death; but evidently confirmed and strengthened. During the many paralytic shocks with which it pleased God to visit him, and which greatly debilitated his whole system, his mental faculties, though in a measure weakened, were not essentially impaired. For several of his last days, his bodily weakness was great, and his speech entirely prohibited; yet his rational powers were retained to the last hours of life. And even when he had drawn near the gate of death, so that it was judged by attendant friends, that every mental faculty was entirely extinct, their mistake was several times corrected, by the mention of some interesting fact relating to the Redeemer's kingdom, which uniformly excited the plainest visible emotions. Upon every other subject, he was perfectly unmoved; but upon this, his feelings vibrated to the last.

On the 9th of September, 1816, his spirit departed; and, no doubt, entered upon that blissful state of perfect holiness, to which, with stedfast faith and prayer, it had so ardently aspired.


The reader is informed, that whatever is found in the following pages inclosed in brackets thus, [] is added by the Compiler.

JOURNAL.



[THE following extract from Doct. Coleman's Journal, was found among his papers, addressed to his children.]

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

Having arrived to the seventy-second year of my age, and feeling that I must, according to the common course of nature, soon leave you, and aware of the difficulty of your perusing my lengthy journal, I have transcribed some parts of it, which I thought would be the most interesting and useful to you. This short extract will exhibit some of the exercises of my mind, and the dispensations of Divine Providence towards me in different periods of my life: and I cannot but earnestly hope and pray, that the perusal of it may lead you to shun those follies and gross neglects of which I have been guilty; and excite you to follow my very imperfect example, as far as I have been enabled to walk in the steps of my Lord and Saviour.

I was born in Hatfield, in the State of Massachusetts, March 17th, (old style,) A. D. 1740.

In the spring of 1742, my parents, Mr. Nathaniel and Mrs. Mercy Coleman, removed to Amherst, where they spent the remainder of their days. They were both hopefully pious, and early instructed me in the principles and precepts of the Christian religion. In consequence of which, assisted by the operations of the Holy Spirit, I was often (even when but a lad,) brought to reflect seriously upon my exposedness to eternal misery, without an interest in the merits of a Saviour. Such impressions uniformly brought me upon my knees before God; and while they continued, the concerns of my soul almost exclusively occupied my attention. But, alas! such seasons did not generally last long, before the vanities and follies natural to childhood and youth, would gain the ascendancy in my heart—quench the emotions of the Spirit—stifle the dictates of conscience—and the world engage the greatest share of my thoughts and affections. Notwithstanding, I seldom lived many months at a time without very serious reflections on Death, Judgment and Eternity.

In youth, I had several very solemn warnings, both by casualty and sickness, which wrought powerfully upon my mind for a time; but the impressions soon wore off.

In the winter and spring of 1758, there was some special attention to the things of religion in Amherst, and conferences were weekly attended. In the early part of this season of the Spirit's visitation, my mind was arrested to

the concerns of my soul, and my anxiety arose much higher than ever before.

As I was going, at a certain time, to visit my minister, to converse with him on spiritual subjects, I was suddenly accosted, as though some one had spoken to me with an audible voice, Where are you going? What are you going there after? You will have nothing to say when you get there—and he will have as little to say to you—for he hates to see you—and you had much better turn about and go home. Many similar ideas were crowded into my mind in quick succession, and with such impetuosity, that it caused me to stop my horse, “and to cast in my mind what manner of salutation this should be.” But, on a moment’s reflection, resolved that it was only a stratagem of the devil, to divert me from my purpose; and hereby, if possible, lead me back to stupidity. Instantly, therefore, I resolved to go forward, in defiance of all opposition from this prince of darkness: and I had not proceeded many rods, before my mind was perfectly tranquil, and when I came there, had a most pleasing interview.

I had been educated in the belief, that it was the duty of persons under serious impressions to make a public profession of religion, as the most likely mean of continuing and increasing those impressions, though they had no reason to believe that they had ever experienced a real change of heart. I, therefore, came forward and joined the church on the

8th of July, 1758. But these religious impressions, like those in childhood, (though of longer duration,) after a few months, gradually passed away like "a morning cloud, and as the early dew;" and I have reason to believe, without any genuine fruits of heart religion.

In the month of October, of this year, I was laid upon a bed of most distressing sickness; which increased from one grade to another, until an enormous abscess was formed on the spine, directly opposite to the right kidney, inclosed in a cystis within the abdomen, containing six quarts, as appeared on the first eruption, and discharged a pint at each dressing for more than a week. In this situation I lay sixteen days, without having my body moved, and was confined to my bed three months. During this time I was removed to Hadley, about five miles, that I might be near a physician, there being none in this place. My abscess continued to discharge about six months; and from the copiousness of the discharge, and the consequent hectic fever that attended me, I sunk to the very brink of the grave: so that I was entirely given up by my physician and friends, and my exit was looked for, from morning to evening, and evening to morning, for a number of days. In this critical moment, when all human aid proved abortive, the watchful eye of that benevolent Providence, that has protected me in many dangers, and supported me in life to the present time, found means, or rather blessed means

for my recovery to a comfortable state of health, so that in about seven months I was able to return to my father's house. In this sickness, I was experimentally taught the inefficacy of a sick bed to produce genuine conviction of sin, or to bring a soul to any realizing sense of its wretched situation by nature: for it is my full belief, that I never lived seven months successively, after I came to years of understanding, with less anxiety of mind, relative to the concerns of a future state, than in this sickness. Although entirely unaccountable to myself, yet, during the whole time of my confinement, I uniformly consoled myself with the idea that I should one day recover.

As my health continued poor for a long time, and there appeared to be little hope that I should ever be able to labour much on a farm, my parents, agreeable to my desire, concluded to give me a public education. In the spring of 1760, I went to Hadley, to pursue my studies. Towards the close of this year, God, of his infinite mercy, was pleased to cause the influences of his Holy Spirit to descend upon this place—many were found anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved—and conferences were weekly attended. Soon after the commencement of this revival of religion, my attention was again called up to the things of my eternal peace. My convictions appeared to take their rise from serious reflection, without the use of any special external means. I endeavoured, very criti-

cally, to review my past life, and thought I had reason to believe, that the Spirit of God had been striving with me a number of times, and that I had as often quenched his gracious influences. I felt at once self condemned, that I had, to the present time, (Felix like,) been looking for a more convenient season, to give my serious and close attention to the "one thing needful;" but that my embarrassment, instead of diminishing, had been constantly increasing. The present time, I was conscious, was, on many accounts, the most disadvantageous I had ever seen; and I became thoroughly convinced that my incumbrances would continue to increase, in direct proportion to the time that I postponed this all-important concern. I was therefore led, and (by the Spirit of God assisting,) enabled, to form the most solemn and determinate resolution, that the salvation of my immortal soul should, for the future, occupy my first attention; and that I would never relinquish the pursuit, without a well-grounded hope of acceptance with God, through the merits of the Saviour. And God, as I have reason to believe, was pleased to bless my weak endeavours, by granting the special influences of his Holy Spirit; for my mind was soon more deeply affected with a sense of my wretched situation, than ever before. Several of my fellow students were hopefully pious, and they were of very great advantage to me at this time. I was at first, apprehensive that the great anxiety of my

mind would entirely unfit me for study, and thus throw me behind my class; but I was enabled, by divine assistance, so to attend to each concern at its proper time and place, that I was afterwards fully convinced, that I made as great proficiency during the months in which I was under the convicting influences of the Spirit, as when I had suffered my books to engross my whole attention.

March 28, 1761. This day completed the twenty-first year of my life: And on this day I began a Diary; hoping, that making a daily record of my exercises, might be a stimulus to me, more faithfully to watch my heart and guard my conduct, in future life.—My anxiety for the eternal happiness of my perishing soul, had now arisen to a great height, so as effectually to destroy all solicitude about worldly concerns. Constant and distressing fear agitated my breast, lest I should grieve away the Spirit, lose my convictions, and that God would leave me to pine away in mine iniquity. These fears were kept alive by an idea which was common with me, that my anxiety was not as great as in weeks past; and also by an idea, deeply engraven on my mind, that this was the last special call of mercy I should ever receive from the Holy Spirit. Such reflections as these were a powerful incentive to me, to use every means in my power to cultivate the operations of the Holy Spirit, and, if possible, retain the blessed Comforter. To this end, I embraced every convenient opportunity to re-

tire into some solitary place, for close meditation, self-examination and prayer—importunately beseeching him to continue the gracious influences of his Spirit, and that he would do that for me, which I felt perfectly unable to do for myself.

April 12. As I was at a conference meeting, meditating upon my wretched situation as a sinner, and the justice of God in leaving me to perish, my heart was suddenly drawn out in love to God and longing desires after Christ, whose character now appeared with a lustre that was entirely new to my apprehension. Returning from meeting, my mind was intently fixed upon this glorious Saviour, and his blood appeared sufficient to wash away all my sins, though never so great. In this frame of mind, retired (on my return,) for secret devotion.

April 21. While I was conversing with a Christian friend, my mind was filled with admiring wonder at the stupendous love of Christ, in giving his life a ransom for the guilty and ruined sons of men; which love appeared beyond expression or conception great. On this subject my mind was sweetly employed for a long time.

April 22. As I retired this morning for meditation and prayer, had my mind overwhelmed with a sense of God's patience and goodness, in waiting so long upon such a rebellious creature; and not only continuing to call me by his word and providences, but by

the strivings of his Spirit, even after I had so often neglected, and abused, his proffered mercy. After the 12th, I uniformly felt differently in my mind, from what I am conscious of ever having felt before. My fear of punishment was greatly diminished; and in proportion, my zeal to find and enjoy Christ was increased: and besides, I enjoyed that tranquillity and serenity of mind, that I never before experienced.*

May 1. Was much agitated with fear, (as I had been for some days previous,) lest I should be left of God to take up with a false hope; and to build for eternity upon the sandy foundation of mine own righteousness. To guard against this, I was led to form a deliberate and solemn resolution, that no experience whatever should ever lead me to rest upon a hope, so as at all to relax my exertions for the salvation of my soul.

May 16. In my morning walk for meditation, took a solemn retrospect of my past life; how often I had grieved away the Holy Spirit, and how much I had done to provoke God to leave me to perish. Having my mind deeply affected with a sense of the wretched condition of a poor sinner without hope, and without God in the world, was enabled, on my return, to address the throne of grace in secret with much fervency and apparent affection. In my

* I did not as yet entertain the most distant idea, that I had experienced any thing supernatural; but considered every thing as the production merely of my natural feelings.

petitions, I earnestly plead, that God would grant me the gracious influences of his Spirit to enable me to do my duty ; and that he would interest me in the merits of the Saviour, and make me a new creature.

The principal part of this day, my mind was sweetly employed in meditations on heavenly and divine things. In the evening, retired into the orchard, where I spent some time, reflecting upon the wicked and abominable life I had lived, and the lamentable state I was in ; when my mind was turned upon the plan of salvation ; and I had a most transporting sense of the love of Christ in giving his life a ransom for lost sinners. In this frame of mind, attempted to pour out my soul in prayer to God ; and soon the eyes of my mind were opened to see, and my heart enlarged to admire, the beauty and glory that appeared in every object around me, which was beyond the power of language to describe, or an unexperienced heart to conceive. The moon, the stars, the clouds, the trees, the blossoms, and even the smallest vegetable upon which my eye glanced, appeared to speak forth the praises of its Creator. With this pleasing and rapturous prospect, my mind was employed nearly an hour, when the glory of the scene began to fade away. My mind was then turned upon my past life ; and I had a most humbling sense of my unworthiness, and shameful neglects ; especially since I had vowed, and publicly engaged to be the Lord's. As I re-

turned home, my soul constantly ascended in ejaculatory petitions; an exercise, to which I had accustomed myself, even in my busiest moments.

Lord's day, May 17. This morning, found my mind seriously employed in contemplations on heavenly and divine things; much in the frame of the last evening.—This day sat at the table of the Lord, and endeavoured to affect my stupid heart with a sense of what Christ had undergone for the guilty sons of men: which led to some severe self-reproaches, that I was no more engaged in religion, and did no more to promote the glory of God.

May 18 and 19. Continued to have an increasing anxiety for my immortal soul; and a more earnest solicitude to enjoy God and Christ, and to get a stronger assurance of my title to heaven. Indeed, my anxiety was now such, as almost entirely to unfit me for the prosecution of my studies.

May 20. As I was reciting to-day in the Greek Testament, it fell to my lot to construe a part of the 14th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, beginning at the 35th verse, where we have an account of our Saviour's sufferings on the cross. Suddenly, my mind was overwhelmed with a sense of the love of Christ, in suffering and dying for rebel sinners: And the view which I had of his glorious character, and of my guilt in so long neglecting his kind offers of mercy, entirely debilitated my whole frame, so that I was unable to secrete my emo-

tions from those present. For some days, I had taken great delight in perusing the word of God, and found the desires of my heart uncommonly drawn out after God and Christ; attended with greater freedom of thought and expression than I had ever before enjoyed.

May 22. My waking ideas this morning, (as had been common with me for some time,) were upon the things of the kingdom. Had this day interesting views of eternal realities; and enjoyed much in Christian conversation. —As I walked abroad this evening, and was viewing an approaching thunder-storm, had a most striking sense of the power and majesty of that Being, who “has his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and has the clouds as the dust of his feet.” My feelings at this time were very similar to what they were on the evening of the 16th.

May 23. Arose this morning in great anxiety about my immortal interest. Read the scriptures before my secret devotions, (as my practice had long been,) and had much engagedness in prayer. Through the day, my mind was greatly agitated with fear, lest I should finally take up with a false hope: yea, I was distressed lest I had done it already. I therefore renewed the resolution which I made on the first of this month. As I retired to rest this evening, I had a most affecting view of myself, as the most helpless of mortal beings, and, at the same time, loaded with accumulated guilt. It appeared to me that I was

the greatest sinner upon earth. Although I was not conscious, that I had ever been left to indulge in those gross vices, of which many are guilty; yet my sins had been attended with so many aggravating circumstances, beyond others, that their guilt appeared greater than that of the most abandoned sinner in the world. And it appeared real to me, that all the time I had been imagining that I was striving to find Christ, I had only been striving to keep at a greater distance from him. Just as these reflections were passing in my mind, suddenly, my conceptions of the character of the Saviour were greatly enlarged, so that he appeared, every way, to answer Solomon's description, "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." His appearance was so charming and captivating, that it drew forth all the affections of my soul in love and gratitude, and threw me into a kind of ecstasy; so that I most ardently longed to leave this frail body, that I might go and be in his immediate presence, where I might enjoy him without interruption for ever. Indeed, so strong was my desire to be with Christ, that I could not, for some time, content myself to remain in the body, until these enrapturing views and feelings had in some measure subsided, and I had calmness to reflect, that it was my duty to wait God's time, which was always the best time. My succeeding reflections were, that while he continued me in the world, I must do all that lay in my power to augment his declarative

glory. But then it turned in my mind, that such an unworthy, guilty creature as I was, *could* do nothing to enhance the glory of such an exalted, pure and holy Being: when conscience seemed to answer, Yes you can, by appearing to-morrow in the sanctuary, as a sincere worshipper. Whereupon, I became impatient to be immediately engaged in the actual service of God; and could not be contented to wait until to-morrow, it appeared at such a distance.—After I had lain in this happy frame for some hours, I reflected, that sleep was as much a duty as actual service; for, by neglecting the former, we were unfitted for the latter: resolved therefore to sleep, if possible, even at the expense of such soul-refreshing exercises; and, to this end, changed my position on my bed, and in a few moments lost myself in a sweet sleep. And I verily believe, if I ever performed one duty in my whole life, with a single eye to the glory of God, it was this night, in going to sleep.

Lord's day, May 24. Awoke early this morning, in the same state of mind, as when I lost myself in sleep the last night, and walked out into the orchard, my usual place for meditation. Here I had another striking view of my wretched condition by nature—saw myself to be a most loathsome and despicable creature, without strength to help myself, and without merit to claim any assistance from God: saw that I had never done any thing *for* God, or for my perishing fellow-creatures, or

even for my own salvation—that I was wholly dependent on the sovereign mercy of God for sanctification and eternal life—and that if he should cast me down to hell, he would be holy and righteous, as well as just. Christ appeared much as he had done the night before, in beauty and glory, beyond the power of my pen to describe. To be with him, and to behold his perfections and works, would, it appeared to me, be the summit of all happiness; and that if I was sent to hell, it would be a delight to me to sing his praises. Indeed, it appeared as though there could be no heaven without his presence, nor any hell where that was afforded. I had a longing desire for the salvation of perishing souls, and felt that I could sincerely and earnestly pray, even upon the supposition that I must be eternally miserable myself, that I might be the only one. Every object around me now shone with a peculiar lustre, and reflected the glory of its Creator. In this state of mind, I attempted to pray; but my heart was so filled with love to God and Christ, and my thoughts so enveloped in contemplations on the beauties of the divine character, that I could not make one petition; but only repeated the expression, *Blessed God*, over and over again, for a long time. Indeed, I had no petition to offer; for my soul was so perfectly satisfied, that there was nothing more that I wanted. With such exercises I continued abroad until called to breakfast. After family duties were attended, I took my Bible,

for secret duties; and that was as new as the world around me: it appeared with an entire new complexion: every letter and word seemed as if lined with gold: and I saw it to be the mind and will of God, as I had never done before. I now felt as if I had a new tongue to pray and praise the Lord; and that which was once my burden, was now my sweetest employ. When I walked the street to the house of God, all things appeared as new to me, as if I had been in a strange place, though they were almost as familiar to me as the furniture of my room. God's house was this day a new place to me. I heard the word with great reverence and delight; and took much satisfaction in singing the praises of God. In the time of public service, however, I had a soul-rending view of the dishonour I had done to the greatest and best of beings, by living such a sinful life, and so long neglecting to attend to his kind offers of mercy. When not engaged in public worship, my time was spent either in reading, meditation, or practical religion. At the evening conference, I had much enjoyment in God; and his service was sweeter to me than my necessary food. After the evening sacrifice, I spent an hour or two, in devout meditation on the divine character, and the employments of heaven, until my rapture was so great, that I scarcely knew whether I was in the body, or out of it.

May 25. I spent much time this day in examining my heart, to see if I could discover

what were its secret springs ; whether for God and religion, or the gratification of the flesh. Yesterday, I thought very little of my own moral character ; for I was so taken up in meditations on the divine attributes, that sordid self was nearly excluded from my mind. But to-day it has been very different with me. My mind has been, the greater part of the day, in a fluctuating state, ebbing and flowing like the tide. One while could say, that I almost knew that I had an ardent love for the character of God ; that I loved my neighbour as myself ; and could rely wholly on Christ for the good things of this life, and for a blessed immortality. At the same time, my heart was filled with a love of pity for the unthinking multitude, who were travelling, stupid and blindfold, in the broad road to destruction. Anon, I was almost overwhelmed with the fear that my supposed religious exercises had been only a delusion ; and that I should at length settle down upon a false hope, and my last state be worse than the first : and that instead of having a new heart given me, as I was ready to hope, God had only given me "*another heart*," as he did Saul, and I should finally go to perdition with "*a lie in my right hand*." Towards the close of this day, as I was in deep meditation on my situation and character, our Lord's words to the Gadarene, out of whom he had cast many devils, were strongly and suddenly impressed on my mind, as though I had heard an audible voice, saying, "*Go home*

to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Immediately I attended to the divine injunction, and returned to my father's house, (for I was then residing in Hadley,) and announced, not only to my parents, but to many other Christian friends, what great things I hoped God had done for my soul.

May 26. 'The first emotion of my heart this morning was, to praise God. But how, and in what manner, could I sufficiently celebrate his praises? I had such a sense of his goodness in the gift of his Son, and the obligations I was under to devote myself soul and body to his service, that words are inadequate to express my feelings. At the same time, was so filled with a sense of my ingratitude to this best of beings, that my heart seemed ready to burst. When mingling with the family, my passions so overcame me, that for a length of time, I could hardly articulate my words. After getting in some measure the command of my feelings, I attempted to warn and counsel my fraternity as well as I was able. I felt as though I could never say enough to influence my friends and fellow-creatures to seek happiness in divine things. In the course of the day, spent a portion of time, (as yesterday,) in examining my heart, as with the candle of God's word, to find whether I was under the influences of God's Spirit, or whether I was deceived, and was yet "in the gall of bitterness

and in the bond of iniquity." I longed most ardently to know the inmost recesses of my heart, and I cried to God in the language of the Psalmist, "Search me, Oh God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." After the strictest scrutiny, I could not find that I was deceived; but felt that I had the most sincere and unfeigned love for the divine character.—A portion of my time was spent in sweet meditation, and the anticipation of spending a long Eternity with Saints and Angels, in ascriptions of praise to the triune God.

May 27, 28, 29. For the most part, calm and composed in my mind, on these days; and sometimes very joyful, in view of spending an eternity with God and Christ in the heavenly world: much as in days past. To have my mind diverted with any worldly employments or conversation, was my greatest burden. Hence my daily studies were in a measure irksome to me. Yet, at intervals, my mind would be clouded, and filled with doubts and fears, lest my heart had deceived me.—On witnessing the interment of an old man, my mind was greatly enlarged with a view of that eternal state of existence, in which I, and all my fellow-mortals, must soon be placed. It appeared to be not afar off, as formerly, but just at hand. And I had such an idea of the inexpressibly awful consequence of a soul's leaving the world without an interest in the Sa-

viour, that I felt as if I dare "not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eye-lids," until I knew that my peace was made with God. And I resolved within myself, that (by the grace of God assisting) my future life should be devoted to his service, and that I would strive as far as possible to augment his declarative glory in the world.

Lord's day, May 31. This morning arose in devout meditation on future and eternal objects. The reading of God's word was sweet to me as my necessary food. It appeared indeed a revelation of the mind and will of a just and holy God. This was a good day to my soul; for I felt a thirst for hearing the word, and was fed by it. In the afternoon, attended a funeral; where I was led to contemplate much upon the uncertainty of human life; and renewed my resolution for new and better obedience. At the evening conference, felt greatly engaged in the exercises of religion, and as though I could never say enough on that glorious theme. But as I was on my return, engaged in close meditation, searching my heart, I found the lust of pride operating there: and what made it appear peculiarly aggravated was, that it was spiritual pride. I was sensible that I had been taking pride in religion, which, in my apprehension, bordered upon the unpardonable sin. At this, my mind was so shocked, that it stopped my progress, and caused me to stand like a statue in the street, for some time, and ponder in my

mind, what an awful, wicked creature I was. My profound ignorance of the human heart, made the shock much greater. I had been so simple and stupid as not to know, but that my spiritual enemies were all slain, and I should have no further combat with them. For I had lived about three weeks without discovering the emotions of any lust in my heart, more than if I had been completely sanctified. But to my grief and surprise I found, that the enemies which I had fancied were slain, were yet alive, and had recovered their weapons and renewed their combat upon me. As soon as my mind was somewhat composed, I went home in a most pensive mood, feeling greatly distressed about the wickedness of my heart: especially after having so recently experienced such divine illuminations.

June 2, 3. On these days my heart was filled with doubts and fears about my spiritual state: finding so much sin in my heart, I was greatly distressed lest the habits of sin were yet predominant in my soul, and I was yet "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity."

June 4. The greater part of this day, I laboured under the same gloomy apprehensions, as for the two previous days; but before night, my mind received some illuminations which gave me an animating view of the loveliness of the Saviour, and an ardent longing to see more of the divine attributes.

June 5. This morning, my mind was en-

larged to view with rapture the beauties of the divine character which appeared in every thing before me ; whereby, I had ocular demonstration of the truth of the Apostle's words, " that the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." And to praise and adore his goodness and long suffering patience to a guilty race of mortals, was my sweetest employment. I had a striking view of the ability of Christ to save lost sinners, and also how delightful it was to him to have guilty creatures come and put themselves under the shadow of his wings for safety.

Lord's day, June 7. After spending a portion of time this morning in close meditation, I had my heart more than usually enlarged in prayer. The main burden of my petitions was, that God would open to my view my real character, and not suffer me to be deceived by my own heart, in the all interesting affair of my soul's salvation. I heard the word preached this day with devout attention. And oh ! how did I compassionate those who I had no reason to think, possessed an interest in the merits of the Saviour ! My bowels yearned over them with sympathetic pity, which was greatly augmented by a view of their ignorance of their wretched situation. I had a most ardent longing of soul that their eyes might be opened to see their forlorn condition without God in the world ; and the infinite

fullness of love and mercy there was in Christ; to relieve all that would lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and accept of him on gospel terms!

June 8. This day visited Mr. Parsons, of Amherst, and related to him all my exercises since I had received comfort: (for I had not seen him before.) He gave me much good advice; telling me how strictly and cautiously I must walk before God; that now, in all probability, was the best time I should ever see, to get an assurance of my title to heaven; and that it was more than probable, if I was not wanting in my endeavours, I might get that degree of assurance that would carry me comfortably through life. And if I was deceived, that was the most ready way to discover the deception.

June 11. For two days past, have had little life and energy in the things of the kingdom. But this morning was uncommonly depressed with a sense of that load of sin and guilt, I found in my heart; and longed most ardently to have the load removed, and the power of sin broken in me, that I might be more conformed to the divine image, and see, and enjoy more of the beauty of holiness.

June 12. This day, I set apart as a day of private fasting and prayer, to prepare my heart in the best and most devout manner that I was able, for the solemn transaction of entering into a secret Covenant with an holy God. (The form of the Covenant, I had previously

prepared ; it being in the words of another ; except as it is altered to suit my particular feelings and circumstances.) After I had spent the principal part of the day in reading God's Word, and often calling on his holy name, to enable me to keep such a fast as should meet the divine approbation, feeling my mind deeply solemnized, I spread the sheet out before God, (which contained the Covenant,) and prostrating myself on my knees, begged of God, that he would enable me to perform this solemn transaction in the most upright and sincere manner, without the least shadow of any mental reservation. Then took the Covenant and read it over reverentially, as if in the immediate presence of God, giving my assent to every sentence : and having set my signature to it, again bowed myself before the heart-searching God, and earnestly implored the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, to enable me to keep my solemn vows, by which I had bound my soul to God, for time and eternity.

COPY OF THE COVENANT.

O MOST dreadful God ! For the passion of thy dear Son Christ Jesus, I beseech thee, accept of thy poor prodigal ; the workmanship of thine own hands, now prostrating himself at thy door. I am by nature a son of death, and a child of hell ; but have made myself a thousand fold more so, by my own iniquities ; especially since I have vowed and

promised to be the Lord's, and to dedicate my life to his service : for I have most shamefully and wickedly broken my covenant vows ; and though with my mouth I professed Christ, in my practice I have denied him : and this my way hath been my sin and folly. Now, Lord, I acknowledge it would be just for thee to cast me off for ever, and swear in thy wrath that I shall never enter into thy rest. But of thine infinite mercy, thou hast promised grace to me in Christ, if I will but turn to thee with all my heart ; therefore, upon the call of the Gospel, I am now come in ; and throwing down my weapons, I submit myself to thy mercy. And because thou requirest, as the condition of my peace with thee, that I should put away my idols, and be at defiance with all thine enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with, against thee ; I do, from the bottom of my heart, renounce them all ; firmly covenanting with thee, not to allow myself in any known sin ; but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the death and destruction of all my corruptions. And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously set my affections upon the world, I do here resign my heart to thee, humbly protesting before thy glorious majesty, that it is my firm resolution, that as far as I am able, I will bid adieu to all sin and iniquity of whatever name or nature ; and will watch against every temptation, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee. I do most sincerely desire grace

from thee, that I may practice this my resolution, through thy assistance, to forsake all that is dear to me in this world, rather than to turn from thee, to ways of sin and satan. And I beseech thee, also, to help me against the temptations of satan, to whose wicked suggestions I resolve by thy grace never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but as filthy rags, and will not stand me in stead in the time of my greatest need, I renounce all confidence therein ; and acknowledge that I am of myself, a hopeless, hopeless, undone creature ; without strength to help myself, and without merit to recommend me to thy favour. But as thou hast of thy boundless mercy offered most graciously to me, wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I will accept of thee ; I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God ; and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of thy most sacred Majesty, I do here take the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my portion and chief good, and do give up myself, body and soul, for thy servant ; promising and avowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ the only means of coming unto thee, I do here, upon the bended knees of my soul, accept of him, as the only new and living way by which sinners can have access to thee ; and I do

hereby solemnly join myself in a marriage covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus ! I come to thee, “ wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ” : a most filthy, loathsome creature ; a guilty, condemned malefactor, unworthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord ; much more to be solemnly married to the King of Glory. But since such is thine unparallelled love and condescension, I do here with all my heart accept and take thee for my head and husband, to love, serve, honour and obey thee before all others ; and this to death. I embrace thee in all thy offices : as a Prophet to teach and direct me ; as a Priest to make an atonement, and to be a continual intercessor for me ; and as a King to rule and govern me. I renounce my own worthiness ; and do here avow thee to be the Lord my Righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and do take thee for mine only guide. I renounce my own will, and take thy will for my law.

And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy holy word, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke ; and subscribing to all thy laws as holy, just and good, I cheerfully take them as the rule of my words, thoughts and actions ; promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy directions ;

and will not allow myself in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Now, Almighty God, searcher of hearts, who knowest all things, thou knowest that I make this covenant with thee this day without any known guile or reservation; at the same time beseeching thee, that if thou seest any flaw or falsehood therein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright, so as shall be acceptable in thy sight.

And now, glory be to thee, O God the Father, (whom I hope to behold from this day forward for ever as my God and Father,) that ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the atonement of undone sinners. Glory to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and shed thy precious blood to wash away my sin, and died that I might not die and perish in my guilt. Glory to thee, O God the Holy Ghost, who by the finger of thy almighty power hast turned about my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah! the Lord God Omnipotent! Father, Son and Holy Ghost! thou art now become my covenant friend, and I, through thine infinite grace, am become thy covenant servant. Amen; so be it. And the Covenant which I have made on earth, be it ratified in Heaven.

SETH COLEMAN.

Hadley, June 12th, 1761.

Lord's day, June 14. Yesterday, had no impressions worthy of particular notice. But

in my morning sacrifice to day, my heart was much enlarged to cry to God, for freedom from the body of sin and guilt, which lay like a heavy burden on my soul. The word preached, I heard with devout attention; but it appeared to me like water spilt upon the ground, that could not be gathered up again. In the afternoon, had such a lively view of the heinousness and aggravated nature of my sins, as wrought in me a most despicable idea of myself. I appeared to be the most hell-deserving creature that ever lived; and I loathed and abhorred myself on account of my sin. My unworthiness, and criminality before God, appeared so great, that I was brought almost to discard the idea, that I had ever had a principle of grace implanted in my heart; for to have such a load of sin remaining, as I yet found predominant in my heart, seemed incompatible with a state of grace. These considerations sunk me, as it were, in the dust. After these feelings had in some measure left me, my reflections turned upon the infinite patience and long suffering goodness of God in sparing me thus long, after I had done so much to dishonour his great and holy name; and the thought, that he was yet waiting upon me to be gracious, excited my highest admiration and gratitude.

June 20. Through this week, I have been labouring with myself, to discover, if possible, what was my real moral character. But have made little progress; my exercises having

been so various. Sometimes, I have felt joyous in view of the prospect before me, and at others, my mind has been filled with doubts and fears, lest all my supposed experiences should prove to be only a delusion of the adversary of souls. And I prayed to God most earnestly, and constantly, for the illuminating influences of his Spirit; and that he would not suffer me to be deluded in a matter of such momentous concern.

Lord's day, June 21. Spent the morning in meditation, prayer, and communing with my own heart; after which, repaired to God's house, hungering and thirsting for the word of life; but heard nothing that met my feelings. I was so enveloped in clouds and darkness, that the word made little impression on my mind. My doubts and fears had now risen to a higher degree than they ever had done, since I first received comfort, and entertained a hope of my reconciliation to God. I had such a lively sense of my guilt, and the wickedness of my life, particularly since I had had such discoveries of God and Christ, that it seemed as though I should sink into the earth. When I reflected on the dishonour and contempt I had cast upon God and the cause of religion, with the deepest compunction, I abhorred myself as in dust and ashes. I had a clear view of its being my *sins* that had provoked a holy God to withdraw from me the light of his countenance; and felt that it would be just, if he should never afford it

more ; and was filled with fears lest *that* should be the case. I felt, that I contracted guilt enough hourly to thrust me down to hell for ever. I greatly doubted the genuineness of any thing I had heretofore met with ; and for a while was ready to resolve with myself to cast away, as refuse, all my former experiences, and set out anew : yet, in attempting, I found it impracticable : still, I greatly feared, that if I depended on what I had already met with, I should go, hoping, down to perdition, “with a lie in my right hand.” Thus my mind was agitated, most of the day, with terrors without, and fightings within ; and distress on every side. A sorrowful day it was to me.

June 22. This day, the same cloudy pillar hung over my soul, until evening ; when I went to visit an old experienced christian aunt of mine, at Hatfield, with whom I had a long and profitable conversation. During this interview, the load upon my heart was in a great measure removed, by the view which I had of the merits of Christ’s death, and sufferings, and how he had abolished death, by taking away its sting, which is sin ; also of his willingness to forgive us all our sins, however great and aggravated, upon the condition of our laying down the weapons of our rebellion, sincerely repenting of our trespasses, and putting our confidence in his merits. All my gloomy apprehensions seemed to evaporate like smoke, before this refreshing view of Christ and his

attributes ; and a sweet calmness of mind succeeded. This happy frame continued until the 25th. In this time, I had much spiritual enjoyment. I thought I experimentally knew what it was to have my will wholly bowed to the divine will, that I could rejoice that the Lord omnipotent reigneth, that myself and every thing was at his disposal, and felt that I was in infinitely better hands than my own.

But on the 25th, the gloom began again to overshadow my mind like a cloud. I found so many remaining sinful imaginations in my heart, and so much propensity to think and do wrong, that my doubts began to supersede my better hopes, until I was much distressed, lest I was yet under the reigning power and tyranny of satan. At the close of the day, my fears were again dissipated, in a good degree, by a conversation with a very lively Christian.

June 26. My mind was again agitated with fear that I should lose a sense of divine things, and be left of God to live so as to dishonour his holy religion. The burden of my distress was not a fear of misery, but of dishonouring the name of Christ. I resolved therefore, in future, to forget those things which are behind, and to reach forth to those which are before ; for I found so much sin in my heart, that I dare not depend at all on what was past for the foundation of my hope.

June 27. Rose very early this morning, and retired into a solitary place, (according to my usual practice,) for serious meditations on

heavenly and divine things ; and to converse with my own heart before secret devotion. I had a refreshing season ; discovering in a peculiar manner, the glory of God in the works of creation, providence and grace. His power and justice in the damnation of impenitent sinners, appeared in a distinguishing light. Adverting to the character of Christ separately, he appeared every way glorious, “the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.” Immediately, all the powers of my soul were drawn out after Christ : I longed to be freed from all sin, and to be perfectly conformed to his blessed image. The more I saw of the beauty of holiness, the more burdensome sin appeared to me.

July 4. The greater part of this week was spent in what I call a Laodicean frame of mind. But I never was so thoughtless, but what the concern of my soul was on my mind, first in the morning, and last at night. Yet I did not feel that zeal in the duties of religion that I could wish. Still at times my mind was so enveloped in spiritual things, that the study of the dead languages was dull and insipid.

A thunder storm arose this afternoon ; and there having been a great drought, it suggested to my mind many reflections upon the goodness of God to his guilty creatures, in all the dispensations of his providence, as well as in blessing the earth with the present rain : also, how easy it was for him to destroy, or preserve, according to his pleasure : and of his

forbearance and mercy, in withholding his wrath against such rebellious creatures; who, to the most ungrateful forgetfulness of all his mercies, add the heinous guilt of open hostility. A pungent sense of my own guilty ingratitude, disobedience and rebellion, succeeded; and a special loathing of myself on account of it.

Lord's day, July 5. Arose this morning, in a cold, lifeless frame of mind, and in the same guilty manner, entered the house of God. It being our stated time for the administration of the Lord's Supper, I strove earnestly to have my heart affected with suitable subjects for the occasion. But alas! though not entirely insensible to the sufferings of Christ for sinful man, and of my own unworthiness; yet how cold were my affections, how languid my faith, and how inactive was every grace! As I retired, I fixed my mind in solemn meditation on what I had been doing; and the inconsistent frame of mind, in which I had commemorated the dying love of Jesus. My heart began to melt within me; and the tears of penitential sorrow flowed. I cried unto the Lord, and he appeared for me. In the afternoon, my heart was warmed and animated in the duties of the Sanctuary; and I had a most ardent longing for a clearer sight of Christ, a fresh view of his glorious perfections. I was abashed and confounded, under a sense of my unworthiness, and the aggravated sins I had committed

against the dear Redeemer, who had done and suffered so much for guilty man; and who was every day loading me with innumerable mercies and blessings. When I reflected that all my sins were cast, as it were, in the very face of this blessed Redeemer of mankind, it cut me to the heart. I was not grieved because my sins exposed me to punishment, but because they were committed against so much goodness and compassion. In the evening, while at conference, I felt as though my whole soul was drawn out after God; I had an inexpressible sense of that eternal state of existence, in which mankind are all to be placed; and of the dreadful horror of being sentenced to the infernal abodes of hell. Oh, how shocking appeared to me, the condition of souls, who were constantly exposed to this awful catastrophe! How striking, that the mass of mankind can be so regardless of the infinite concerns of eternity, when the very word eternity is enough to strike sinners with astonishment, if they had not benumbed senses, and adamantine hearts! My apprehension of those things was so great at this time, that if it had not been for the secret hope within my breast, it seemed as though I should instantly run into delirium. And as I was on my way home, I resolved still more firmly, that I would give no rest to my soul, until I was satisfied of being ready, at any time, for the solemn transition from time to eternity.

July 6. 'This day, my mind has been in a

calm, quiescent frame, and my thoughts engrossed in the things of religion. But I unwittingly fell into company, when I was necessitated to hear much worldly, light and trifling conversation, which was grating to my ears, and irksome to my mind. As soon as decency would permit, I quit their society, greatly elated with the idea of escaping temptation. This gave me a higher sense of the excellence and dignity of religion; and the divine character appeared more lovely than ever, and I felt renewed zeal for his glorious cause.

July 7. Enjoyed the same calmness and composure of mind, as yesterday; and as a good Providence would have it, fell into company, entirely of a different description from that of yesterday. I had a most delightful interview with some experimental Christians; and took great delight and satisfaction in conversing with them on vital religion. This pleasing theme seemed inexhaustible. And I felt grieved to the heart, for those that could live contented without knowing and tasting the sweets of true religion; that any should be content to feed upon husks, when there is such rich provision offered them in the gospel of Jesus. My exercises arose to a flame of zeal for God and his cause, and the most ardent longing to see more of his glorious attributes. Sin appeared to me the most odious thing in the universe; directly opposed to the moral government of God, affronting to his pure and holy majesty, and calculated to destroy all good, and effect all evil.

July 8. Continued to hunger and thirst after holiness. I longed to arrive to a greater imitation of the perfect pattern set us by our divine Lord and Master. I had a peculiar dread of being left to the abusive sin of using what few talents God had been pleased to entrust me with, in the service of an opposing kingdom, and not in his service, and for the augmentation of his declarative glory among men. The idea of committing one sin, pierced my heart with many sorrows; and yet I was conscious of being guilty of committing them every hour. But I thought I could truly say, that it was not the habitual bent of my heart.

July 11. This day had a long conference with Mr. Parsons, and gave him an account of my past and present religious views. To which he gave one in answer, "That is the temper of a Christian." But this did not in the least dispel my doubts, which always, in some degree, overshadowed my mind, even in my most lucid intervals: but rather proved a stimulus to my mind, to exert myself more vigorously to "make my calling and election sure."

Lord's day, July 12. This hath been a good day to my soul. Had uncommon enlargedness in prayer; took great delight in reading God's word; and heard it preached, not as the word of man, but as the word of the living God. It seemed as though he was speaking from heaven to his creatures upon

the earth. All the day my mind was intently fixed upon heavenly and divine things ; and my soul was filled with love and zeal for God, and Christ, and his cause. In proportion as my love and zeal increased, my sense of sin was also increased, and my sorrow and repentance deepened. The deadness and remissness of which I had been guilty, appeared in a most glaring and aggravated light. My mind was so enveloped in these considerations, as in a great measure to obliterate all other thoughts. I frequently put the solemn question to my heart, whether I was then ready and willing to leave the world, and all the enjoyments of sense, to go and be with Christ? After the closest scrutiny that I could make into my heart, it would answer in the affirmative. I could see nothing in this world worth living for, when put in competition with the enjoyment of Christ's presence : at the same time, I could not say that I was entirely without fear to meet the King of terrors ; lest when I came to be weighed in God's impartial balance, I should be found wanting : for I was never without some doubts of the genuineness of my experience. Sweet will be the remembrance of this day ; spent with my eyes in heaven, the earth under my feet, and, as it were, with Christ in my arms ; in a certain degree waiting for the solemn summons of departure. At the conference in the evening, with an expanded view of eternity, I had my heart affected with inexpressible pity for poor,

ignorant, self-blinded sinners, who were going inattentively, and even jovially, along the broad road that leads to eternal destruction ! Most earnestly did I pray that their eyes might be opened by the Spirit of God, to see their awful danger ; and their hearts made to accept of Christ, that they might escape it.

July 13. I awoke this morning prepared to adopt the language of the pious Psalmist, and say, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, Oh God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Most of the day was in the same frame of mind as yesterday. In some intervals, however, my heart did not glow with the same fervour of affectionate devotion. But when I attended family devotions at night, (which was immediately after spending considerable time in close meditation, looking into my own heart) I had such a sense of heaven, and the happiness of being in the immediate presence of God, that if I knew any thing of my own heart, I was willing to leave the world and all terrestrial things, to go and dwell for ever with the Lord ; but could not say that death had lost all its terrors.

July 14. This morning found me fervent in spirit, highly relishing the exercises of morning devotion. I felt the happiness of having my will swallowed up in the divine will, rejoiced to have every thing according to the good pleasure of God. This frame continued through the most of the day. But

when I retired at evening for meditation and devotion ; I had lost in a measure the fervency of feeling that I had experienced but a few hours before ; and could not, with the utmost exertion, recover it. My prayer seemed little more than lip service ; and I was experimentally taught, (what I doctrinally knew before,) that we cannot in the least command the influences of the divine Spirit ; and that we are equally dependent on the sovereignty of God for every gracious exercise, as for the first implantation of a gracious principle in the heart.

July 15. This morning's sun found me more senseless than it left me yesterday, even to that degree that I was but little affected with my stupidity. I strove in vain to have my cold heart receive a proper sense of my guilty, deplorable state : but in attempting to look to God for relief, I only increased my guilt by my coldness and stupidity. In this deplorable situation I continued most of the day. In the afternoon, attended the interment of a youth, who was suddenly taken from time, into eternity, in the bloom of life. I sought to improve this solemn call, to my spiritual advantage, by making the most affecting reflections on the mournful scene. And God was pleased to bless my weak endeavours, by granting me the animating influences of his Holy Spirit ; so that I returned from the solemn transactions of the funeral, a very different creature (in a moral view,) from what I was when I went. My soul was so filled with love

to God, from a view of his divine attributes, that I felt a desire to depart and be with Christ, rather than remain in this clayey tabernacle.

July 18. For three days past, have had more uniformity in my exercises than has been common for me of late; my mind having been, the greater part of the time, ebbing and flowing like the tide. And should I attempt to particularize all my lucid intervals, and my gloomy seasons, I might swell these sketches to a volume.

On the 17th, as I was at the window, viewing the visible heavens, my mind was instantaneously enlarged with an uncommon sense of the glory of God in the works of creation, which I could compare to nothing more natural, than having the window shutters of a room suddenly thrown open to the meridian sun. This sudden and surprising view, threw all my passions into a glowing heat of admiration and wonder, and caused me to adore and magnify that incomprehensible wisdom and power, by which the worlds were made. This prepared me for a sweet season of devotional exercise, in which I thought I had some foretaste of heavenly enjoyment. But this extraordinary warmth of feeling was only temporary. However, in my darkest and most stupid hours, divine things were constantly on my mind, and engrossed the most of my time.

Lord's day, July 19. Although the duties of religion were constantly uppermost in my mind this day, yet I felt but little of the life

and power of the gospel of Christ. I could hear the word preached with attention and pleasure, but it made little impression on my heart; and my mind was not fed with it, as heretofore. In this stupid manner was the holy Sabbath spent. In the evening, at conference, I had a new discovery of the exceeding vileness of my heart. On hearing a person express himself in an elegant manner, and with fervency and spirit, in an address to the meeting, the shameful passion of envy arose in my breast. But in a few moments I was made sensible of my sin, and felt the keenest compunction of heart: and thought I could say that I hated all sin with a perfect hatred; and had a most ardent desire to be wholly freed from that fiend of hell, that I might be more conformed to Christ, the divine model of perfection. I had a clear, impressive view of the exquisite beauty there was in holiness; and returned home with lively, animated desires and resolutions for new and better obedience; feeling that as for me I would serve the Lord.

July 20. Called myself to an account for omitting to read God's word, which I had sometimes done through the day, by reason of my application to study. My neglect was the more astonishing, as I was conscious to myself that if I ever took real satisfaction in any thing, it was in reading the word of God, and contemplating the gracious promises so abundantly contained in it. I felt grieved for my ingratitude and misimprovement of such an

inestimable privilege, and resolved for the future (the grace of God assisting,) to amend. In the course of the day, had much satisfaction in religious contemplations, and reflections on the things of the kingdom of Christ.

July 21. In the forenoon, was greatly depressed with doubts and fears about the genuineness of my love to God and religion. I found myself so easily drawn into sin, by temptations; and my heart so prone to evil, that it appeared presumptuous to suppose myself in a gracious state.—In the afternoon I had my eyes opened to discern spiritual things in a more conspicuous light; longed for nothing so much as to have the habits of sin broken in me; and pondered much how happy I should be, if I was only freed from this body of sin and death.

July 22. This day, was very happy in my mind, and for some time fancied that my hope was stronger than death. I could see nothing in time that I wished to live for, or that bore any proportion to the felicities of the Paradise above. I was filled with wonder and astonishment at the goodness of God in selecting such a wretched sinner, while he left multitudes as good by nature, and much better by practice, to perish in their sins. This wrought in me the warmest sentiments of gratitude to the author of all mercies. My meditations on the wonderful plan of redeeming mercy were peculiarly sweet and animating. It seemed that eternity would be too short to fathom the

height, and depth, and length, and breadth of redeeming love, and to celebrate its praises. However, though my thoughts were scarce a moment diverted from the employments and enjoyments of divine things, yet my fervency and animation was often abated. Astonishing depravity and stupidity! It is frequently exclaimed, "Oh the folly of sinners!" But how much more emphatically may we say, Oh the inconsistency, the folly, the guilt, of Christians, who, having once tasted of the superior joys of religion, can ever grow cold and languid in its employments!

July 24. To-day have had a feast of fat things in religious conversation. It was at once delicious and instructive. This was succeeded by the hearing of a Sermon from Mr. Parsons, of Amherst, from Matth. xxv. 10, "And they that were ready, went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." The doctrine was, that they, and they only, who were prepared by a supernatural change of heart, would be admitted to the "marriage supper of the Lamb." He first gave a description of that change. Secondly, what they would go from, who were admitted. And thirdly, what they would go to. The sermon contained much seasonable nourishment to my mind. I had a feeling sense of every word that dropped, and swallowed it all as eagerly as the nursing babe does it mother's milk. I had such a sense of the ecstatic joy with which the saints will enter into the beatific vision of

their Lord, with the song of Moses and the Lamb in their mouths, and set down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in their Father's house, that I was filled up to the brim. Words would but darken counsel, in attempting to describe the extent or sublimity of my views upon this pleasing theme. If these things yield such inexpressible satisfaction to our limited capacities here, what will be those joys which "eye hath not seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived," hereafter?

July 25. Had the same happy frame of mind continued to me through this day. Felt the same insatiable thirst after holiness: longed for greater conformity to the perfect character of God, to have my will wholly obedient to the divine will, and to be freed from the body of sin and death, which was a burden too heavy for my heart to bear. Oh, I thought, how happy it would be, to live according to the pattern set by the blessed Jesus! But alas! how infinitely did I come short of it? I could truly say, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." In my evening retirement for devotion, I strove to have my mind prepared more fully for the duties of the morrow.

Lord's day, July 26. Was taught by the experience of this morning, that all our efforts, however strong, are inefficacious without the aids of the Spirit, to mend our hearts, or change our moral views. For notwithstanding my endeavours the last evening, I awoke this morn-

ing in a cold and lifeless frame ; though not so far sunk as to be insensible of my stupidity. After spending a portion of time, lamenting my state before God, perusing his word, and crying for the interposition of his Spirit ; I had such a view of the divine perfections as drew forth all the powers of my soul after Christ, and I longed most ardently to be where I might behold him face to face, and for ever share the tokens of his love. All the day, after the evaporation of the morning cloud, I experienced the Divine presence, which made it a Sabbath-day indeed to my soul. The word preached was sweeter to my taste, than honey, or the honey-comb.

July 27. Though as much engaged in religion as yesterday, yet had not that light, and special fervour of love. Nevertheless, my hopes were strong, my resolutions firm, and my pantings after God and Christ ardent. In the evening, visited an old man in the vicinity, who, to human appearance, was on the confines of the grave, in a state of insanity, and probably without a preparation for the solemn change. This affecting occasion suggested many cogent reflections to my mind, too numerous to mention. I endeavoured to make a faithful application of the scene to my own soul, and felt that the gracious difference of state which I enjoyed, laid me under the greatest obligations to give all diligence to make the calling and election of my soul sure, in time of health and youthful vigour.

July 28. Was much animated by a conversation with a young, lively convert. It was to my heart like adding combustibles to fire. I had at this time a lively view of the beauty and glory of God's character; the amiableness, exalted nature, and absolute necessity of religion; the extreme stupidity of mankind; the shortness and uncertainty of life; the duration of eternity; the misery of those who are lost; and the happiness of those who for ever drink rivers of pleasure at God's right hand. These solemn ideas rushed into my mind, in such quick succession, that it seemed like one complex view; and for a while, quite overpowered me.

July 29. A day of much spiritual enjoyment. Had most refreshing communion with God, in the season of secret devotion in the morning. How trifling appeared all the baubles of earth, while I was in the banqueting-house of my Beloved, and feasted under the banner of his love! I could indeed say,

"What sinners value, I resign;

"Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine:

"I shall behold thy blissful face,

"And stand complete in righteousness."

My apprehensions of divine things were lively and animated through the day; and my love and zeal for the cause of Christ most ardent. My cup of delight seemed filled to the brim. At evening, while in this glow of affection, I was favoured with a call from one who desired an interview with me upon the

very subject which was my life and delight. His savoury discourse increased the fire of love for God and Christ in my heart. I could say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." I took sweet counsel with my friend, in conversing upon the wonderful benevolence of God, in sending his Son into our world for the redemption of sinners. And we expressed our mutual admiration of the character of his Son, so illustriously displayed in his ready fulfilment of the covenant of redemption. If the Father was glorious in sending his Son, the Son was not less so, in coming, and voluntarily yielding perfect personal obedience; whereby he has so mysteriously wrought out a righteousness that can justify guilty man. How precious is he to the believer, in being his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption!

July 30. This morning also experienced the sensible presence of God in my devotional exercises. I had an uncommon degree of spiritual light, joy, and peace, imparted to my mind, which drew forth all the powers of my soul in prayer and praise. Lived through the day in nearness to my heavenly Father, experiencing the gracious and enlivening influences of his Spirit. At intervals, my mind received such rays of supernatural light, as could be compared to nothing more fitly than vivid flashes of lightning in the twilight. Such-like singular things have not been unfrequent with me

for some time past; sometimes appearing in clear and strong views of particular divine truths, and sometimes in having the reality of things that are hereafter to take place, impressed upon my mind as strongly, as if then exhibited to my personal view.

As I was occasionally standing at a window this day, gazing upon the works of creation, in the heavens, and upon the earth, my meditations turned on the day of judgment, and on Christ's coming to judge the world at that great, decisive day; when I had as strong a sense of the reality of these affecting transactions, as if I had then seen him actually descending in the clouds of heaven, with his shining retinue.

July 31. Spent the day with much uniformity of feeling; my mind neither elated nor depressed; but most sweetly employed on heavenly and divine things. At evening, however, when I took my accustomed walk for the exercise of my body, and the indulgence of my mind in solemn meditations, I was experimentally taught, that our thoughts are not our own; for, notwithstanding my seeming command of them through the day, yet, on this occasion, when I attempted to collect and fix them upon particular subjects, I found I had no more command of them, than of the wind. This was a striking specimen to me, of our dependence for every thing, even for the regulation of our thoughts.

Lord's day, August 2. Alas! what a fickle, unstable creature is man! without power to help himself, and without merit to claim the assistance of God! How suddenly is the scene changed with me, in respect to my mental exercises! A few days since, I was all light in the Lord; but now, a thick cloud has overspread the horizon of my mind, intercepting the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. My soul has become almost like the parched ground, thirsting for the gentle rain. The gloom began to gather yesterday, and to overshadow my mind. This morning I could think upon God and Christ, and think freely, but without emotion. My heart was as impenetrable as a rock.

"If aught was felt, 'twas only pain
"To find I could not feel."

At my season of morning retirement, I strove with my might to get a preparation of heart for the sacred duties of the day. But alas! my strength was perfect weakness; and I was obliged to enter the sanctuary of God in this deplorable state, destitute of spiritual life. My attention was arrested by the preaching, but my understanding only was fed: my heart was so chilled, that it received no warmth. The world was to me like water spilt upon a rock, that makes no impression. Thus the withdrawment of divine influence leaves the heart that has often been melted under the preaching of the Gospel, hard and impenetrable. — Before going to conference in the eve-

ning, I sought unto the Lord renewedly for the return of his Spirit, that I might no longer be the joyless and uncomfortable subject of such awful insensibility. I cried earnestly in the words of David, "Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. Hide not thy face far from me: put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help: leave me not, neither forsake me, Oh God of my salvation." And with David I was soon enabled to say, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me." In the plenteousness of his mercy, he drew near to my soul, and delivered me out of my trouble. He shed abroad his love in my heart, and I again enjoyed freedom of access to the mercy-seat. How greatly were the comforts with which my soul was delighted, enhanced by their having been withheld! As cold water is to the thirsty, so is the return of spiritual peace, to the soul that has been in darkness. How fervently does such an one exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!"

August 8. Through the past week have enjoyed my mind in a good degree, though not free from doubts and fears about my title to the joys of heaven. At intervals I enjoyed some transient flashes of supernatural light, but in a less degree than heretofore. I had great pantings of heart to see and know more of God, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I had a

strong desire for something more than a common hope of salvation. I coveted the attainment of the full assurance of hope. And my constant prayer was, that I might be enabled to use the proper exertions necessary to this end ; that I might show that diligence which the Apostle recommended to the Hebrews, which he asserted was “to the full assurance of hope unto the end.”——My meditations this week were much upon the solemn scenes which will instantly open to our view, when our eyes are closed in death. God and Christ, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven, and devils and damned souls in the dark regions of hell. How different, I reflected, would these objects appear to us in eternity, from what they do, while in this world ! From these reflections my mind naturally proceeded to the still more august scene at the day of judgment—That day,

——“For which all other days were made ;
“For which earth rose from chaos, man from earth ;
“And an eternity, the date of Gods,
“Descended on poor earth-created man !”

Oh the solemnities of that “day of dread decision and despair !” How vain have been all attempts of human language to describe it ! Even the sublime descriptions of the Bible, being necessarily adapted to the finite capacities of the human mind, must fall far short of the reality. Eye hath not seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived, any thing of the wonder and astonishment, which the

scenes of this awful period will produce among the countless millions that will be assembled. As I contemplated these interesting things, my heart was much affected with the stupidity of mankind respecting them. I could hardly be resigned to the lamentable fact, that notwithstanding we are so explicitly warned by a revelation from heaven, of the reality of these things, and our special concern in them, yet so many either reject or are perfectly thoughtless about them. But I could only weep and pray for the perishing world ; and bless and praise a merciful God for the interpositions of his grace in behalf of some. It is mere mercy, and most condescending grace, that he opens the eyes of any, who so wilfully blind themselves. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

Lord's day, August 9. Another distressing season. All day spent in the same unhappy frame of mind as last Sabbath, under the hidings of God's gracious countenance.

I had set apart a season on Saturday, to prepare for the solemnities of the Sabbath ; but God was not pleased to bless my efforts : And perhaps they were made too much in my own strength.——Oh happy, blissful state of heaven ! where the heart will no more be cold, but the flame of divine love continually increase its warmth ; the presence of God be continued with increasing brightness, and fulness of

joy be uninterrupted for ever. Oh, what will it be, to be once fixed in heaven !

Saturday, August 15. With how much gratitude should I record my spiritual enjoyments through this week ! The cloudy pillar that hung over me on the Sabbath, was soon removed, and the blessed Comforter restored. But yet there have been some interims, in the course of the week, of doubts and fears about my state. My mind was somewhat darkened : and when we cannot see clearly, we are ready to doubt whether we ever saw at all. The more we know of our hearts, the more apt we are, upon such occasions, to suspect the genuineness of our experience.

August 17. As I was construing Greek, in the 20th chapter of St. John, my mind was filled with an amazing view of what Christ had done and suffered for guilty men. This special sense of his wonderful love, compassion and condescension, drew forth all the affections of my soul, in love and gratitude to that all bounteous benefactor. How hard must be the natural heart, to withstand such unparalleled goodness and mercy ! Who, that has any sense of the Saviour's sufferings, can witness the contempt and neglect of the world in general, towards him, without being convinced of the total depravity of the human heart ?

August 18. In my morning devotions, had my tongue loosened, and my heart warmed

and enlarged to such a degree, that I felt as though I could pour out all my soul in prayer and praise. Surely the "spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out upon me. The Spirit helped my infirmities with groanings that could not be uttered." I wanted to call upon all, and say, in the language of the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Bless the Lord, ye angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominions. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul."

Lord's day, August 23. Arose this morning with much warmth of affection towards God, and my heart fired with zeal for the promotion of the cause of Christ among men. I had much fervency and enlargement in prayer, and the tears of contrition for sin flowed most copiously. But notwithstanding, when I visited the house of God, I had lost my fervency, and devotional frame of mind. I could hear the word of God with good attention, yet it penetrated but little farther than my ears, not affecting my heart in any sensible degree. Thus was I unstable as water in my exercises. A sense of my stupidity lay heavy on my mind, and I cried unto Him who

alone dispenses the influences of the Spirit, to appear for me, and receive me. In his loving kindness and tender mercy, he was pleased to draw near and open my heart, and prepare it to accompany my ears in hearing the word of God.

In the afternoon, had a good season in the sanctuary, and at the conference in the evening. I would record the goodness of God to me in these quick returns of his favour, and bless his name for ever.

August 25. Had an interesting interview with a young convert, when savoury conversations set all the springs of my heart in motion. Oh the delights of Christian friendship and communion! How did our hearts burn within us, when we talked of the wonders of redeeming love, and the charms of God's holy character! And how were we affected with pity and compassion, for those who had no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, these important things! I felt an unusual spirit of prayer and supplication for a perishing world, and great zeal and love for the cause of Zion. My hatred and abhorrence of sin was much increased, and I felt more earnest than ever to be freed from its baneful influence.

August 29. Upon a retrospect of the week, found my mind had been much agitated about secular concerns. The result of offering myself for entrance at college had dwelt much upon my mind. O how easily are we seduced into neglects of duty! Upon consid-

eration this day, I found occasion to reprove myself, for a neglect on several previous days, of spending a portion of time in devout meditations before secret prayer. To this neglect, in part, I attributed my present lukewarmness. Felt my weakness, and that in God alone was my strength as well as wisdom, To him, therefore, I looked most earnestly for upholding power to preserve me from falling into neglect and wanderings. Resolved, with his assistance, to be steadfast and uniform in that duty, which I had found so pleasant and profitable to my mind.

To-day, had sudden flights of illumination, which broke in upon my mind like lightning, and, while they continued, produced as much of a change in my internal feelings, as the darting of the sun from behind a thick cloud does, in the complexion of the earth. In these seasons, I felt fresh and increased compunction for sin, as committed against an holy and benevolent God. The clearer sight I had of his holiness and goodness, the greater was my sense of the guilt and odiousness of sin.

Bid farewell to the school, and family where I had boarded, in Hadley, and returned to my father's house.

September 12. This day returned from New-Haven, where I had been to enter College, and found, during my tour, that new objects, and new avocations were calculated to divert the mind from serious meditations, and obstruct the progress of religion in

the heart. Found it necessary, therefore, to be watchful and diligent in my exertions to keep my mind on the most important subjects. —How strong is the attachment of the human heart to earthly objects, and earthly pleasures! How necessary for the Christian to have on the whole armour of God, “that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.” If he would war with success in the spiritual warfare, he must be watchful that he entangle not himself “with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

After my admission at College, I was much agitated with anxiety about the consequences of changing my situation; not knowing what temptations I might be subjected to from the giddy youth with whom I expected to mingle. I feared also, that my exchange of spiritual instruction and privileges might not be to my advantage.

Lord's day, October 18. My mind had now become more established, and my exercises of heart more uniform, than in months past. The duties of religion grew more and more interesting, and I was more and more punctual in my attention to them. The duties and entertainments of public worship appeared more and more attractive. I could always say, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” There I repaired with solicitude to seek the face and implore the favour of God; to learn,

the doctrines and duties of religion, and to unite in singing the songs of Zion.—Was much animated and enlivened under the preaching of the word to-day: the truth inculcated met my mind with force, and did me good.

Lord's day, Oct. 25. Arrived in New-Haven the last week, and began my College life. Went to the house of God to day, hungering and thirsting after the word of life, and was abundantly satisfied. The subject was so evangelical, and the style so sublime, that I was most agreeably disappointed. My entertainment, for the first Sabbath in this place, so far exceeded my anticipations, that I was quite overcome; and scarcely able to appear with propriety.

In the afternoon, I was so far enabled to govern my passions, as to enjoy the rich provisions of the sanctuary with more calmness. I felt the assertion of David verified: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."

October 31. This week passed pleasantly. Found new christian friends, and had opportunity of attending good conferences. This evening the President called all the communicants of the church in College together, for the purpose of instructing them upon the nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, upon which they were to attend on the morrow. His instructions were very ap-

plicable; and his description of the necessary preparation for a right partaking of the Lord's Supper, was satisfactory, and congenial with my feelings. I endeavoured to make a profitable improvement of his instructions, and felt as though I could not be sufficiently grateful for my distinguished privileges.

Lord's day, November 1. This Sabbath of the Lord was a delightful day to me. The sacrament was administered; and I partook with comfort and edification. My mind was much solemnized with a sense of the importance of the transaction; and I heard the word preached with the highest relish.

November 2. This evening my class convened in the library room by order of the President, where he gave us much good and pertinent advice. He recommended the establishment of prayer meetings among ourselves, to which a number of us agreed. I was much rejoiced to find so many fellow travellers to Zion, to counsel, strengthen, and comfort me.

November 7. This evening had our first meeting; was much animated and encouraged, being convinced that this was the most effectual measure that could be adopted for mutual improvement, growth in grace, and advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

November 14. In reviewing the variety and excellence of the spiritual privileges I had enjoyed the past week, I was quite overcome with a sense of my obligations to Him who had made out his allotments to me in so much.

mercy. Prayer meetings, conferences, religious conversation, and a blessing upon all, had crowned the week with enjoyment. My heart, by the use of these means, was kept alive, and warm in the sacred cause of piety. How invaluable are religious privileges! How lamentable the condition of those, who are not only destitute of them, but perishing for lack of vision! Alas! how many millions are left, in consequence of the apostacy of their forefathers, to entire ignorance of Christ, and the way of salvation! How many never heard his precious name! But, blessed be God, his promises of grace to them are sure; they shall in due time be accomplished, to the joy of the whole earth.—Alas! if the state of the heathen is so pitiable, how much more is the state of those who obstinately reject the Gospel in this land of light? How aggravated must be the condemnation of gospel sinners, who, in spite of all remonstrance, neglect and despise an improvement of their privileges? The Lord have mercy upon the multitude who have no mercy on their own souls, and compel them to come into the kingdom of Christ, “in the day of his power.”

November 26. This evening joined a social meeting, (as it was called,) established upon the following plan—To begin and end with prayer: the intermediate space to be occupied with free and familiar conversation on theological subjects and practical religion: each one laying open his feelings, and the exercise of

his mind, without reserve. The object of the meeting was to solve each other's doubts, to admonishing, and, if possible, to correct each other's errors; and in every way in their power, to help each other forward in their christian warfare; watching over each other with brotherly love and faithfulness: the subscribers to meet once in two weeks. I was much pleased and encouraged by the establishment of such little institutions, being more and more convinced of the necessity of a diligent use of means, in order to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is no less true of the spiritual, than of the natural life and health, that they must be preserved and advanced by the use of means. In either case, it is perfectly consistent with entire dependence upon divine power. "In God we live, and move, and have our being:" but it is by our use of prescribed means, that we enjoy these blessings, either of a natural, or spiritual kind.

Lord's day, November 29. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee!" This was one of those precious seasons in which I was uncommonly nourished with spiritual food, and strengthened in the inner man by divine communications from on high. How cheering was the word of life to my soul! how satisfying to my taste! The Spirit took of the things of Christ, and shewed them unto me;

and my eyes were opened that I beheld wondrous things out of the law of the Lord; out of the Gospel of his grace. As my views of the word of God were enlarged, I longed to have them more and more enlarged. I longed “to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; so as to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Oh, to realize the perfect worship of God in his temple above! There the immortal “spirits of just men made perfect” shall be enlarged in all their faculties, to receive more copious views of the divine perfections. Oh, how will a full view of the transcendant beauties of holiness beam upon their astonished vision! They will indeed exclaim “Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord of hosts!”

In the evening, a number of us met the President in the library, where we were favoured with much excellent advice. He recommended the adoption of various measures for our spiritual improvement; advised us to sign a covenant, purporting our resolution to live a christian life; and to use our influence to promote religion, and suppress vice, in others.—How much more might be effected in behalf of the cause of Christ, by united exertions! A combination of effort is of invaluable importance and utility. Hence the importance of public-spiritedness among Christians, of studying and proposing ways and means of advancing the interests of Zion, and being

forward to carry into effect extensive plans of operation. Until something more is done in this way, the glorious day promised in the Gospel, must remain at an affecting distance. But I trust the Lord will overturn, and overturn, until proper means shall be used to enlighten and christianize the world. Then may we look for the cause of Christ to rise upon the ruins of Satan's kingdom; the heathen to be given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession."

Jan. 1, 1762. This day our professor gave us a new year's discourse; in which was held up to view, the many great obligations God was constantly laying us under to love and serve him. This led to many serious reflections, and a season of self-examination. In taking a retrospective view of my life, since I had professed Christianity, I felt deeply humbled under a sense of my short comings in duty, and my shameful neglects of it. When I reflected upon all the common mercies I had received at the hands of my heavenly Father, and above all, the *special*, the *spiritual*, and, as I hoped, *saving mercy* I had experienced; and then considered the returns I had made, I was covered with shame and confusion! When I considered how many gracious deliverances, both from temporal and spiritual trials and dangers, I had received, by his watchful providence over me, and how they had been in a measure forgotten, or remembered with emo-

tions that were cold in comparison with what they should have been, I abhorred myself as in dust and ashes. When I reflected upon my solemn covenant vows, how aggravated did the guilt of my life appear? Ah! I had taken the covenant of God in my mouth; but how had I paid my vows unto the Most High? I felt that shame and confusion of face belonged unto me. I humbled myself before God, and cried unto him for forgiveness, and assistance in forming resolutions for new and better obedience. I committed my way unto the Lord, feeling deeply sensible, from my past experience of weakness and spiritual slothfulness, that in him alone was my help. I felt that I was “nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.” I could say, “My soul waiteth for the Lord: he is my help, and my shield.” Let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness.

March 27. From the last date, nothing special has marked the exercises of my mind. For the most of the time, have been cold and formal, in comparison with what I was in months before. I “resolved, and re-resolved—then did the same.” Was not, however, without some happy seasons of lively religious exercises: though my frames have been variable. Sometimes fervent and enlarged in prayer; at others, cold and formal—sometimes had brilliant views of divine truth, when reading the word of God; at other times, it was (as it were) a dead letter—sometimes, in the public assemblies, my mind was deeply impressed

with the word preached; at others, had dull ears to hear, and a cold heart to perceive. Thus chequered was my life. Oh, astonishing condescension of God, to bear with the coldness and ingratitude of his children, who are under such infinite obligations, and still requite all his unparalleled goodness with such partial obedience! How long-suffering and patient—how slow to anger! His tender mercies are indeed over all his works. But how affecting to a Christian, to contemplate and contrast all their undutiful and backsliding conduct with the tender mercies of their heavenly Father! How often is he ready to exclaim, in the language of Watts:

“And are we wretches yet alive?

And dare we yet rebel?

’Tis boundless, ’tis amazing love,

That bears us up from Hell!

Turn, turn us, mighty God!

And mould our souls afresh;

Break, sovereign grace! these hearts of stone,

And give us hearts of flesh.

Let past ingratitude

Provoke our weeping eyes,

And hourly, as new mercies fall,

Let hourly thanks arise.”

This day experienced a very merciful preservation from temporal danger. A number of scholars, with myself, went, for amusement, on to the Beach, (as it was called,) in a long-boat, near a mile from the wharf. While we were there, a boisterous wind arose, which made it impracticable, as we judged, to return.

without exposing our lives. And if we tarried there, the tide would soon float us off; which rendered our situation very hazardous. I embraced an opportunity, while my comrades were at the other end of the Beach, to prostrate myself on the bottom of the boat, and implore the divine aid. I continued earnestly supplicating his mercy, until their approach interrupted me. Very soon the wind fell away, and we had a comfortable return. Oh, how little do we realize our entire dependence upon almighty power to protect and preserve us, while our dangers are unseen! but when they become visible, we call upon God with an earnestness that becomes a realizing sense of our entire helplessness, and need of his preserving power. In respect to spiritual danger, this is peculiarly the case. Notwithstanding we are warned by the word of God, by the ministers of the Gospel, by providences, and by the strivings of the Holy Spirit; still we proceed on our thoughtless course, in ease and carnal security until almighty power arrest us, open our blind eyes, unstop our deaf ears, and soften our hard hearts, to see, and know and feel our danger. When the convincing and convicting influences of the divine Spirit, strike home to the heart a sense of guilt and danger, then we begin to be in earnest about the salvation of our souls, and cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" But even then, in many instances, (so hardened is the human heart, and so inclined to carnal ease and stupidity,)

the most pungent awakenings will be overcome; the solemn realities of death, judgment and eternity, forgotten; and a preparation postponed to a more convenient season. Alas! in how many instances do mankind rush on in entire thoughtlessness about the concerns of their souls, until their dreadful situation is realized in the flames of hell! Oh the stupidity, the deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness of the human heart!

April 8. At noon intermission, retired into the field, for the benefit of meditation; and there God was pleased to give me a refreshing from his presence. I mused upon his ways of mercy to mankind, and upon the perfections and glories of his nature, until the fire of love burned in my heart, and I cried out, "Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" I prostrated myself upon the ground, unbosomed myself to God, and gave vent to my passions in praise and adoration. While in this happy frame and humble posture, he was pleased to give me an extraordinary view of his perfections in general; particularly of his power, which, (though not a new experience,) greatly revived my spirit, and gave me new life and animation. How precious the moments, when God draws near unto the soul, and its communications with him are sensible and delightful! What a sweet repose does it yield to the heart! What a banquet of love! It leaves a supply of rich spiritual provision for a length

of time to come. I was enabled, from the strength gained by this refreshing season, to perform all personal and relative duties with life and animation, and all the public and private exercises of religion, with great zeal and delight, for some days.

April 16. Notwithstanding my late animation, how soon did I find myself in a state of coldness and stupidity ! My mind inclined indeed to the contemplation of divine and heavenly things ; but no warmth of love and devotion in my heart. The Bible, when I read it, was like a sealed book. When I retired for devotion, (as an eminent Christian once said,) “ I had to drag myself into my closet ! ” and when there, my coldness and formality in prayer alarmed me. When I visited the house of God, though my attention was fixed, yet had no heart to treasure up, nor energy to practise, what I heard. I mourned my guilty frame of mind before God, and prayed for the quickening influences of his Spirit ; but little emotion was produced in my heart. It was “ a day of darkness, and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains.”

July 3. From the last date, little more than coldness of heart is recorded. The spirit of life and light had departed, and left me to carnal self. No enlivening beams of the Sun of Righteousness were shed upon my soul, except at a few short intervals. Though the subject of religion dwelt upon my mind, still

my heart was but little moved. It had lost its first love and zeal. Oh, this indwelling sin, this deceitfulness of heart, that should lead to such spiritual slothfulness! What a paradox is a *half*-sanctified Christian! He has been favoured with a taste of the indescribable pleasures of communion with God, of having the light of his gracious countenance lifted upon him, of the joys of pardoned sin, faith in the precious Saviour, and hope of eternal life; and yet, strange to tell, he is sometimes left to adopt the language of Job, and say, of God. the source of all his former joys, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." But when a Christian is awakened from a decline, and brought to a sense of the remissness and inactivity that has led to this breach between God and his soul, how sensibly does he feel his just desert of chastisement! He feels that he deserves not only to be forsaken of his heavenly Father for a season, but for ever. He bows before him with compunction of heart, endeavours to follow the direction of scripture, and humbly hopes to realize the gracious promises, "Return to the Almighty, and thou shalt be built up; and put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle; then shalt thou have delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy

prayer unto him, and he will hear thee ; thou shalt pay thy vows unto him, and his light shall shine upon thy ways." While he is meekly submitting himself to the frowns of his heavenly Father, how thankfully does he read, "He has not utterly forgotten to be gracious, nor resolved that he will be favourable no more. For the Lord will not cast off for ever ; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."

Lord's day, July 4. To-day my mind was enveloped in the concerns of my soul. The subject came up with renewed solemnity and interest, and my heart was much affected with spiritual things. A sense of my late Laodicean frame of mind greatly affected me. I set myself in earnest to examine my heart ; took a faithful retrospective view of my life ; and considered with anxious solicitude, whether I had not just reason to fear that I was unable to give a satisfactory reason for the hope that I had entertained. My prayer was, "Search me, Oh Lord, and prove me ; try my reins and my heart !" If sin hath dominion over me ; if I have deceived myself in the great affair of my soul's salvation ; open thou mine eyes, that I may see the reality of my case ! Alas ! how have I fallen ! "Where is the blessedness I once spoke of ?"

"Where is the blessedness I knew,

"When first I saw the Lord ?

"Where is the soul-refreshing view

"Of Jesus and his word !"

Once my whole soul was engaged in the service of God; my breathings of desire after him were most ardent, and I thought sincere. My soul followed hard after thee, and my language was, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, Oh my God!" "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than gold or silver. Oh, how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day! How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." But alas! "How is the gold become dim, how is the most refined gold changed!" How have I flagged in my zeal! how have my warm desires failed, and my feet been removed from thy testimonies! I have "turned aside, like a deceitful bow." How shall I look up to thee for pardon? Must I not expect to be judged and chastened? must I not expect to be cast off? How can I come with boldness to thy throne of grace to ask for mercy and forgiveness? My coldness, ingratitude, and sins against covenant vows, all rise up before me! But where shall a poor sinner go but unto thee? "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Thou hast declared thyself, "The Lord God merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." In the name of Jesus, I would plead for recovering grace, restoring mercy, and forgiving love. Oh "restore unto me the joys of thy salva-

tion!" Make me truly penitent; and may I no more wander from thee. I felt the kindlings of repentance in my heart; a sight of the cross melted me into contrition, and made me more than ever loathe and abhor my sins of carelessness and stupidity; and I prayed most earnestly for strength and assistance from Christ, to enable me to live near to God, in the lively exercise of grace. My soul felt encouraged to wait upon the Lord, with a secret hope that he would again bring me to rejoice in his love, and glory in his promise. I therefore cast myself upon his mercy; feeling, that of myself, I could do nothing.

July 15. Continued discomposed in my mind. The serenity of those days, when the candle of the Lord shined around me, was not yet restored, except at intervals. Doubts and fears about my moral state, crowded upon my mind; and Satan was permitted to come in with his stratagems, perplexities, and temptations; and no marvel that he tempts and troubles the poor weak children of men, when he was so bold in his assaults upon the Son of God. He even tempted me to doubt the reality of invisible things; suggesting queries like these: How do you know there is a judgment day? How do you know that there is any reality in religion? And then again, supposing religion to be a reality, how can you suppose your personal religion is genuine? This flung me into great perturbation

of spirit. But at last, I was enabled to dispel my distressing doubts, cast off the malignant fiend, and a sweet calm succeeded. My enjoyment in divine things increased: I could again approach the throne of grace with some boldness, and cry "Abba, Father!" with filial confidence.

July 18. This day was set apart for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, by the Churches in New-Haven, on account of a severe drought which distressed the land. I attended the public exercises, and felt much interested. Had a strong sense of the guilt of the land, for which we were judged and chastened of the Lord, and particularly, of my own sins. My sensibility increased through the day. My mind was much enlarged in prayer, and in reading God's word; and I found the exercises of devotion so pleasant and desirable, that I spent the evening in walking alone for meditation. When the soul enjoys nearness to God, how insufficient are all surrounding temptations to draw it aside! The more we enjoy of divine things, the more we are raised above these meaner enjoyments. It is only in our sad departures from God and duty, that the tempter finds us such an easy prey to his seductions. "As we depart from the fountain of living waters, we hew out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water;" lay a foundation for much bitterness of spirit, and do much injury to the cause of Christ. Oh, happy person, of whom it may be said, as of

Enoch, he walked with God ! To the worldling this may not seem at all desirable ; for he desires not the knowledge of God's ways. To walk in the honour, or riches, or pleasures of this world, is his chief aim. But alas ! when death comes to arrest him, what will they profit his poor soul !

March 1, 1763. God changeth not ! When the weakness and mutability of mortals are considered, how consoling to reflect, that God changeth not ! Since the last date, my exercises and frames have been variable. I have by no means walked with God in uniform love, zeal, and fidelity. Sometimes, have enjoyed the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness ; at others, the cloudy pillar overshadowed me. At no time have been forgetful of duty to my God, or neglected it. He has been in my thoughts often, in ejaculatory petitions, and at stated seasons in prayer and praise : but alas ! with how little energy and spirit have these duties been many times performed ? Oh, the patience, long-suffering, and goodness of God to me, that he does not utterly forsake and leave me to carnal self ! But he is a covenant-keeping God. Oh, for more wisdom and grace to help in my constant time of need ! Oh that my heart was always warm in the cause of God ! Oh for an increase of grace and perseverance, that the progress of sanctification in my soul might be more evident ! When shall this body of sin and death be removed,

and the corruptions of my heart be slain? How happy the period when sin, and temptation, and sorrow, shall give way to perfect holiness, triumph, and joy! Happy saints of light! no more to be burdened with guilt, no more to go out from the blissful presence of God; but for ever to unite in the song of Moses and the Lamb, and sing glory to God in the highest.

Lord's day, April 3. Communion day.—The word preached was not only sweet to my taste, but refreshing, and nourishing to my soul. I had a lively sense of the guilt, and detestable nature of all sin; but especially of my own. The Eucharist, upon which I attended, was peculiarly solemn and affecting to me. The representation of the sufferings and tragical death of Christ, wrought very powerfully upon my feelings. The thought of these amazing sufferings being endured by the immaculate Son of God, for such rebels and traitors to his crown and dignity, was overpowering to my feelings. In view of the cross, how exceeding sinful did sin appear! Astonishing sight! The Son of God, his only Son, full of grace and truth, hanging, bleeding, and dying upon the cross, to save those who are piercing him! Oh, love stronger than death, that many waters could not quench, or floods drown! Oh, why are not the hearts of the whole world drawn unto him, and melted into the warmest emotions of wonder, love and praise? Can human nature be proof against such benevolence and mercy as this? Ah! yes, indeed! the

very malefactors that were to be crucified with him, with death staring them in the face, could rail upon him, and cast the reproaches of the multitude "in his teeth." Yes, this blessed, dying Saviour, is "he whom" (as Isaiah prophesied,) "man despiseth; he whom the nations abhor; he is despised and rejected of men." Yes, Barabbas, a thief, and a murderer, is preferred before him. The multitude cry, Away with him, away with him, let him be crucified! Yea, and his professed friends too are sometimes cold towards him, and even for a time forsake him. Oh, Peter! where wast thou? what was the expression of thy love, when he was betrayed and dragged before Caiaphas? And what, oh my soul! has many times been the expression of thy love, towards this lovely Saviour? Surely shame and confusion of face belong to me. Surely should I lie low in the dust, and "walk softly before God" all my days? Oh, may I at all times walk in view of what Christ hath done for my soul, that my affections may not be placed inordinately upon earthly objects!

April 20. The strength I received on the last communion season, and the continued influences of the Holy Sprit, have preserved me in an animated frame ever since. I have been enabled to keep near the throne of grace, where I have had many sweet seasons of communion with my heavenly Father, and my divine Saviour. Oh, why cannot I "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth?" Why cannot I ever

keep him in my view ? Oh, to have his blessed image perfected in my soul ! Lord, “hold thou me up, and I shall be saved.” “Uphold me by thy free Spirit.”

June 1. For some time past, my heart has been inconstant : the animating influences of the Spirit have been in a measure withdrawn. My constant complaint has been,

- “ Why is my heart so far from thee ,
- “ My God, my chief delight ?
- “ Why are my thoughts no more by day
- “ With thee, no more by night ?
- “ Why should my foolish passions rove ?,
- “ Where can such sweetness be,
- “ As I have tasted in thy love,
- “ As I have found in thee ?
- “ When my forgetful soul renews
- “ The savour of thy grace,
- “ My heart presumes I cannot lose
- “ The relish all my days ;
- “ But ere one fleeting hour is past,
- “ The flattering world employs
- “ Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
- “ And to pollute my joys.
- “ Trifles of nature, or of art,
- “ With fair deceitful charms,
- “ Intrude into my thoughtless heart,
- “ And thrust me from thy arms.
- “ Then I repent, and vex my soul
- “ That I should leave thee so :
- “ Where will those wild affections roll,
- “ That let a Saviour go ?”

June 23. On this day, most narrowly escaped being drowned. The circumstances were too interwoven to admit of concise description : suffice it to say, that two or three

minutes delay of assistance would have cost me my life. When I was got upon the land, I could scarcely stand. This providence affected my mind very much, and filled me with the warmest gratitude to the author of so signal a deliverance. My heart was almost incessantly employed in ejaculatory thanks for a time, and prayer for grace to enable me to devote my spared life more assiduously to God.

Oct. 27. Much of the time, in weeks past, have been dull in devotional exercises. My mind has been too much engrossed with my studies, and other secular concerns, for the growth of grace in my soul. Some of the time, have felt the power of religion upon my heart, and enjoyed the animating influences of the blessed Comforter; but alas! this guilty stupor still cleaves to me. How difficult to attend to the duties of the world without having them interfere with our spiritual concerns, and dampen our ardour in the cause of Christ! We are commanded to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," at the same time that we are "diligent in business." But how difficult for us, feeble, imperfect, sinful creatures, to be strict in obedience to both commands! Oh for a constant supply of grace to preserve this wicked heart from declension! Oh let me be frequent, constant, and faithful in my examinations of this deceitful heart, that I may keep it "with all diligence!" Let me be more careful and attentive in reading the word of God, as it is the standard of faith and practice, that I

may be furnished with preservatives against coldness and stupidity in all the various branches of duty. "I can do all things through Christ's strengthening me." But alas! how weak, how vile, how undone in myself!—"Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me," a miserable sinner, and help, strengthen, and preserve me in the pathway of thy commandments.

April 14, 1764. This was a day of surprise and consternation in College. Fifty scholars were taken violently sick, between the hours of 10 and 12; and before the next morning it was found that eighty-two, out of ninety-two, that boarded in College, were in a most distressing condition; some appeared as though they could not live through the day, and others were entirely helpless. Two of the tutors and one of the cooks, were also seized. The first symptoms were an intolerable griping pain in the breast, with an excessive burning at the pit of the stomach. This extreme distress produced such shortness of breath, that some of them fell into convulsion fits, so that it took three or four men to hold them. Their pain and anguish continued, generally, an hour and an half, when they were seized with a tremendous vomiting and purging, which seemed as though it would bring them to a speedy dissolution. After being thus exercised for some time, they were more easy, could breathe freely, but left very weak. This catastrophe was

very striking and unaccountable. It was supposed, however, to be effected by poison.

I was much impressed upon the occasion, with a sense of God's goodness to me, that I was not numbered among the subjects of such excruciating distress. My mind was very much solemnized, and led to many serious reflections upon the absolute dependence of God's creatures, and their astonishing stupidity upon the subject. A moment's suspension of his preserving power, leaves us to perish; and yet we naturally conduct as though we were our own keepers. Alas! mankind in general, instead of devoting their ten thousand times forfeited lives, and undeserved health, to their gracious Author, spend them in the most pointed hostility to his law and government, and most ungratefully abuse all his mercies upon their lusts.

Jan. 1, 1765. Many things occurred the past year, very interesting to me at the time, which I noted in my journal, as I wrote daily. But at this distance of time, I cannot expect they would excite interest in the minds of my children. Suffice it to observe, that my religious views and feelings were much the same as the year before. It was a year of much anxiety with me, on account of the long continued, and, at times, dangerous sickness of my dear mother. My submission to the will of God, was much tried by apprehensions of the loss of her. I believed her moral state to be such, that, in being "absent from the body,

she would be present with the Lord ;” but so great would be our loss, that the flesh was not willing to bear it. But these painful separations must be endured, while in a state of mortality. And when He, who “was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” sanctifies these severe trials to the soul, and they lead us nearer the Source of all enjoyment, we even find them the richest blessings. Nothing is so calculated to convince us of our dependence upon God, and the comparative emptiness of all earthly comforts, as to have the streams of these comforts dried up. While in prosperity, surrounded by dear friends and connexions, we are apt to forget that this is a wilderness world, and that here “we have no continuing city, no abiding place ;” but when our heavenly Father, who knows that it is good for us to be afflicted, comes, and with a stroke, cuts off some of the flowers of our imagined paradise, our eyes are opened to see the reality of our state, and we realize the infinite importance of seeking “a better country, even an heavenly.”

This New-Year’s day, I set apart a portion of time for serious and devout meditation, for recounting the many mercies of the Lord to me, to review my past life, and examine my heart by the word of God. My soul was drawn out in ascriptions of praise and adoration, for the goodness and mercy of God, in all the way in which he had brought me thus far : especially, for renewing and sanctifying

grace, and for the sensible manifestations with which my soul had often been refreshed. My heart felt broken for the sins of my life, sins of childhood and youth, and particularly, for the more aggravated sins of the time since God had been gracious to my soul, given me a knowledge of the Saviour, and the rich enjoyments of his presence. I renewedly presented my soul to the fountain of Jesus' blood for cleansing, and sought earnestly at the throne of grace for strength, to live more blameless, and more devoted to God. I formed many resolutions for new and better obedience: and prayed that they might be made in the strength of Christ; sensible that of myself I could do nothing. Vain indeed, is creature strength.

February 12. About the 14th of January, I was seized with a violent pain in my eyes, accompanied with a weakness, that wholly deprived me of the privilege of reading; in consequence of which, I obtained liberty to journey; and on the 6th of February returned home: visited my family friends and connexions, until the 10th, when I returned to N. H. with the same weak eyes, and cold heart, with which I left it.

February 26. Felt that I had reason, from the stupidity of my heart, to fear that my New-Year's resolutions were made too much in my own strength. Those animating views of the perfections of God, and those rapturous seasons of intimate communion with Him,

have not been so frequent, as formerly. But the variety of privileges and means of grace, with which I have been favoured, have not been wholly lost upon me. I am conscious of deriving benefit from them all. I have never been so cold as to be indifferent to spiritual things; but have always been particularly fond of religious conversation. I have valued my resources of this nature, very much. Had much improving, religious conversation, with Miss Sarah B——, who was much engaged in the good cause.

Lord's day, March 3. This day felt much animation upon the subject of religion, and attended to all the duties of the holy Sabbath with feeling and engagedness. The word preached was sweet to my taste, and did me good. I had a sense of its being the word of the living God to sinful man. Partook of the sacrament with solemnity of mind, and a feeling sense of the benevolence of God, in so loving the world, as to "give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, may not perish, but have everlasting life." I had an affecting view of the odious nature of sin; and especially did my own grieve and burden me. The idea that mankind reject and despise the Saviour, in the very face of his astonishing sufferings for them, never seems more affecting, than when viewing the memorials of his dying love. Oh! to think that the vilest sins are preferred before him; that while his tears, and blood, and groans, are unnoticed,

these odious, detestable sins are made our bosom companions; is extremely affecting to those whose hearts have been melted before the Cross.

March 14. I was exercised with many doubts and fears; lest I had deceived my own soul in respect to my experience. I was fearful that all was a delusion, and that I was yet "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." This anxiety and despondency has continued since about the 4th of this month.

May 5. Left College, it being spring vacation, and went to Amherst, where I found the Spirit of God operating upon the minds of many of the inhabitants. Many were in great anxiety for their souls, and some "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." This scene was not without its effect upon myself. It brought "my soul, and all that is within me," into exercises of prayer and praise. It was good to see sinners awakened to consideration. But my anxiety for myself, lest I had not made my "calling and election sure," was much increased by the sight of such distress in others. The negligent life I had lived, since my profession of knowing and loving God, rose up in terrific appearance before me. My heart became deeply sorrowful for my sins, so that I groaned under their weight from day to day. The danger of self-deception, and laying a foundation for eternity on the sand, which, when the wind and hail should descend, would be swept away, appeared greater than ever;

and my distress, lest this was my case, arose to a great height. I cried most earnestly and feelingly to God, for the influences of his Spirit to open my eyes, and discover to me my real character and condition.

Lord's day, June 2. Heard the word with devout attention : but Oh, how different were my feelings, under the dispensation of it, from what they were in the days of my soul's prosperity ! I was rejoiced to see others hopefully entering the ark of safety, and taking hold of eternal life ; but all within my own breast was gloom and darkness. My heart, while it rejoiced in the hopeful safety of others, was sorely grieved, and my spirit deeply wounded, on account of the reproach I thought my careless life had brought upon the cause of Christ. And when I reflected upon the brilliant discoveries he had vouchsafed to make of himself to me, in times past, and that, after all, I had treated him with such base ingratitude ; I felt how justly God might withdraw the precious light of his countenance, and leave me to wretchedness and wo. My heart was melted like wax in the sun, and I cried with the Prophet, " Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night !" Most earnestly did I long to have one of those rapturous views of Christ, and to have that fire of love kindled in my heart for him and the brethren, that I once thought I had. I longed to go out of self entirely, and lie helpless and impotent at the feet of Christ,

with my will wholly resigned to God's holy and righteous requisitions.

June 4. In the evening, attended a singing meeting at Mr. P——'s, which was turned into the most solemn religious meeting I had ever seen.

After the exercise of singing, Mr. P—— addressed the meeting, in a very solemn manner, upon the subject of religion. Every one present seemed deeply affected; there was scarcely a dry eye in the room. Many were in deep distress for sin, ready to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" Some were so debilitated by their distress for their souls, that they were unable to walk, or stand.

In the course of his address, Mr. P—— pointed out the danger of taking encouragements for conversion itself. This I greatly feared was my case; and my fears were augmented from an apprehension that I had never felt such distress for sin, as I then witnessed in others. The meeting was closed with prayer. I returned in agony of soul.

On the next day, my anxiety increased, and I was sometimes ready to resolve with myself, to give up all my former hopes, as spurious, and endeavour (with reliance upon the grace of God,) to lay a more sure foundation. But when I came to reflect more coolly upon the subject, it appeared to me, that if I was fully convinced that I was in a state of nature, I should instantly run into a delirium. To trust to my former hope, I dare not; and to

get rid of it, I could not. Thus my situation was forlorn. I felt as though it would be worth a thousand worlds to have such a sight of Christ as I once had, or thought I had. At one time, I felt as if my heart was adamant; anon my "head was waters, and mine eyes fountains."

I visited Mr. P——, stated to him my feelings, and begged his instructions. He told me by no means to rest upon my former hope; but to strive to keep my heart as near God as possible, to walk in all his ordinances, to examine closely the foundation of my hope, over and over again, and to look to God continually for the illuminating influences of his Spirit, to show me whether I were in the right way. But all his advice was insufficient to dispel my melancholy fears, or raise my drooping spirits. Next day, the distress of my mind arose to a still greater height. The sense I had of my backslidden situation, the dishonour I had done the cause of religion, the many times I had grieved away the Holy Spirit, and rejected the blessed Redeemer, who had shed his precious blood for such a hell-deserving creature as I was, distressed me beyond description.

Lord's day, June 9. My late distress and darkness had, in a great measure, subsided. The cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness, had again raised my spirits and healed my broken peace.—Had much enlargedness and fervency in prayer this morning, and en-

retired upon the sacred duties of the day, with engagedness and delight. The word preached was sweet to my taste. I heard it with animated attention, and my soul was greatly refreshed. I felt that it was good to be there ; and the idea, that I was soon to leave the town, where the gracious influences of the Spirit of God were so eminently enjoyed, affected me with pain. Often did my heart heave a sigh of regret, that I was not to hear Mr. P—— preach again for a length of time. And I felt a dread upon my mind, lest, when removed from that animated place, I might decline into a cold, formal round of duty, and grow languid in the cause of Christ. While my heart was musing upon these things, Mr. P—— quoted the words of the Psalmist, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall, doubtless, come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Upon which my mind was instantly impressed with the idea, as forcible as though an audible voice had spoken, This is for you, this is for you. It struck my mind with indescribable force, and brought every passion of my soul into exercise, so that I had to exert all the strength of my nervous system, to appear decent. I retired from the house as privately as possible ; and as soon as I arrived at home, retired to my closet, where I gave full vent to my smothered passions. I was so overcome with the mingled emotions of sorrow and joy, that to a by-stander, I might have ap-

peared childish. Never before, did I have all the feelings of my soul harrowed up, as then. But when I really came to myself, my mind was calm and serene.

June 10. Left the pleasant scenes at Amherst, for the bustle of a college. I went with a heavy heart, full of anxiety for the consequences of leaving a place so favourable to serious impressions. My eyes, though much better, would not admit of my paying close attention to books; and this gave me much time for religious conversation, which engrossed the most of my leisure hours.

Lord's day, July 28. In the afternoon our professor gave my class a farewell sermon, from these words,—“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” The discourse was excellently adapted to the occasion, containing much useful instruction, and many important directions how to demean ourselves in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. He enjoined it upon us, in the most emphatic manner, to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” as the only way to obtain true and substantial good, either here or hereafter. Upon this interesting occasion, I did not fail to renew my resolutions of serving the Lord. Was much strengthened and encouraged; and most sensibly felt my dependence upon him who had hitherto sustained me.—Since the spring vacation, I have enjoyed peace and happiness of

mind ; and my exercises have been more uniform than usual, being neither elated with joy, nor depressed with sorrow.

July 31. My class received the honours of college. It was called a private Commencement. We, however, had all the ceremonies of a public one.

Aug. 31. Began the study of physic, under the tuition of Dr. L. Hubbard, of New-Haven.

Oct. 21. Entered into the solemn and important connexion of marriage with Miss S—— B——. I was much impressed with a sense of the importance of the transaction, both as it respects this life, and that which is to come. We began our new relation by most devoutly invoking the divine blessing on each other, personally and relatively, that we might live together as heirs of the grace of God. We prayed God most earnestly for grace, to enable us to lead lives consonant to the resolution of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Lord's day, Feb. 23, 1766. This day, had great compunction of heart and distress of soul, on a retrospective view of my past life. My coldness and short-comings in duty, arose in order before me. Since I had lived in a family state, it appeared to me I had been more formal, and received less of divine influence than formerly, The reflection that I might be left of God, to live to the world, and not by faith on the Son of God, affected me.

much, and caused me to cry most earnestly unto my Almighty Helper, to sustain me from declension. Under a sense of my sins, I implored of him the exercise of his pardoning love and mercy through Christ, and the energetic influences of the Holy Spirit on my heart, to bring me to a correct knowledge of myself, and of my duty.

May 8. Have, in weeks past, been burdened with a luke-warm, Laodicean spirit. At times have felt the power of religion on my heart; but, alas! my mind is often too much engrossed with the things of earth.

Sept. 7. Received from the Lord the blessing of a son, which removed a heavy anxiety from my mind, and filled my heart with gratitude and praise to the Author of all our mercies.

Nov. 11. A dear sister, who had resided with me since the 17th of May, was removed from us by death. This sore visitation wrought very powerfully upon my mind, and led me to have my contemplations much in the unseen world, where the spirit of my departed sister was an inhabitant, and where my soul would soon make its appearance. My prayers were most ardent that the affliction might be sanctified to me, and all the friends, for our everlasting good.

Nov. 18. Visited my sorrowful parents, and afflicted brethren, in hopes of reviving their drooping spirits. We unitedly sought consolation in God, the only unfailing source of

comfort. Oh, what a refuge is God, in times of heart distress! After a short visit, returned to my family.

July 15, 1767. Left New-Haven with my family, to commence the labours of my profession in Amherst.

April 21, 1768. Ever since I have been settled in Amherst, have lived in coldness and formality. Have had little of the animating influences of God's Spirit, except at intervals; and felt little of the power of religion upon my heart.

May 10. My heart was filled with the warmest emotions of gratitude, for the special mercy of God, in appearing for us in an hour of peril, and bestowing upon us the blessing of a living and proper daughter. The occasion produced an increased sense of the responsibility which the care of immortal souls brought upon me, and my utter insufficiency, of myself, to answer it. I was led to look more earnestly than ever for divine assistance; and for grace and wisdom to train up my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Jan. 1, 1769. Selected a portion of time for special meditation, to call in my wandering thoughts, and consider the many obligations of gratitude that lay upon me. In reviewing the train of innumerable mercies which had strewed my path in life, I was grieved that I could not render a warmer tribute of gratitude and praise. All had been mercy on the part of God, and all ill desert and hell desert on mine.

I longed to give up myself wholly to God, and prayed earnestly for divine help, to enable me to keep my heart with all diligence, to rise above the temptations and perplexing cares of life, and to have my affections supremely placed upon heavenly things.

Feb. 13, 1770. The past year, my religious exercises have been, comparatively, uniform. I have had less animation in the cause of religion, than in some previous years; yet, have never been so stupid, in my dullest seasons, as not to have eternal things bear with weight on my mind.

Feb. 13, 1771. At this period we had another special occasion for praise and thanksgiving, being blessed with the gift of our third child, and second daughter. Reflected, that God had graciously lent us another precious child, to nurture and train up for him; and devoutly implored of him, that he would grant us grace and wisdom to instruct our children in his fear, and to maintain such tempers and dispositions towards them and each other, as should meet with the divine approbation and blessing; and that, should the Almighty Donor call for them, we may be enabled cheerfully to resign them; and may we so faithfully discharge every personal and relative duty, that when our Lord and Judge shall call for us, the idea of death may be no terror to our minds.

January 1st, 1772. Another year of my life is now ended: but alas! how little of it

have I devoted to God! My mind has, indeed, been much upon the glorious things of His kingdom; but how cold and dull have been my affections! How languid my zeal! How void has been my heart and life of the reigning power of religion! How have I suffered my pressure of business and domestic cares, to engross my thoughts, to the exclusion of religious contemplations! Oh, for the energetic influences of the Divine Spirit, to preserve me from this lukewarmness, to which I am so shamefully subject! Wonderful long-suffering, patience and mercy in God, that I am not arrested with judgment for my sinfulness.

March 6. The birth-day of our fourth child. Our earnest prayer was, that we might live answerable to our mercies.

February 1, 1776. A time of peculiar sickness. Was continually pressed with business abroad, until sickness in my own family demanded my whole time and attention: for all my children, at home, were taken with the canker within a few days of each other.

February 9. We were called to see our sweet F—— take her leave of this vain world, and depart, as I have reason to hope, to one infinitely better. This was such a day as I never saw before: a day in which we were most effectually taught the worth of Christian consolation and support.

February 10. We were informed this morning, before day, that our little S——, who had been for some weeks at my father's,

was sick with the same disorder as the others. This was indeed a gloomy and trying day to us; one child a corpse; the other four very sick.

This afternoon, committed the remains of our dear departed child to the gloomy mansions of the dead—Dust to dust, there to remain until the morning of the resurrection.

February 14. The life of S—— was despaired of. My wife, who was present with the child, was necessitated to take her long farewell of it, while in the agonies of death, to go and take care of the sick children at home. This she did with as much composure, as though she only left her for a night. Nothing but true evangelical faith and Christian resignation could thus have overcome her strong, ardent passions. It was a very affecting scene to the spectators.

At eleven o'clock, P. M. this most pleasant and interesting child resigned her mortal breath. She had survived twenty-seven hours without swallowing, and the most of the time in great distress for breath. She lacked two days of being six years old. We never knew her discomposed in temper, but once, while she lived. This was indeed a day of mourning and of severe affliction to us; but we mourned not without hope. There were many circumstances, which influenced our minds to believe, that we had more cause to mourn, (in a moral view,) for the living children, than for those which were dead.

February 16. This day committed the remains of our dear child to the house appointed for all living. This afflictive visitation deeply affected my mind, and led me to search my heart for the Achan, that might have called for these severe strokes of my heavenly Father's rod. I was frequently at the throne of Grace, and found it delightful to be there. I felt an acquiescent disposition under the allotments of Providence. Leaning on my Saviour for strength, I resolved to be more attentive to the performance of every personal and relative duty, and yield my heart more unreservedly unto God.

March 5. Was called to sing of mercy as well as judgment, in that our other children were spared, and restored to health. How infinite in goodness and mercy is our heavenly Father! His strokes are few indeed, in comparison with our crimes.

August 2. Was blessed with another little daughter, whom we named S——, after the one we had lost.

Jan. 20, 1779. A few weeks since, it pleased a merciful God to appear, by the influences of his Spirit, and awaken a few persons in this place; among whom, some of my children and friends were included. This awakening, so near, and around me, affected me in a peculiar manner. The idea of souls being born to God, gave new animation to my heart, and brought all the powers of my soul into exercise.

Jan. 23. Experienced the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit in a very wonderful manner and measure. So greatly was my sense of the importance, excellence, and glory of religion increased, that all former impressions seemed swallowed up and lost. I waived all business for the most part of the day, and engaged in conversation with my family upon the subject. I felt all life and animation in the cause of Zion, and my tongue was loosened to speak of her interests, and pray for her prosperity. The theme and the joy seemed new. My dear partner, whose heart was ever filled with joy and peace in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, was indeed a help-meet to me, in a spiritual sense; sweetly participating in the rich provisions of the covenant of grace, which lay open to our enjoyment. We took sweet counsel, and went to the throne of our God together, where our souls were feasted with the "bread of heaven, and the food of angels." How did our hearts burn within us, as Christ communed with us from off the mercy-seat, and refreshed us with the word of his grace, and the joys of his salvation! How did we rejoice to unfold the sacred pages of the word of life together; to read of the holy character of God, and of his wonderful love to this fallen world, in sending the Saviour, Christ!

March 1. The view of my past life, which, for some time, had been continually before me, at last overwhelmed me in doubts and fears

lest I had deceived myself, and took that for gold, which would not pass current in heaven; and I should, when tried by my Judge, receive the inscription, "Mene, Tekel." I was filled with keen remorse for the reproach which I thought I had brought upon the precious cause of Christ; and it melted me into penitential grief, and caused me to walk softly and humbly before God. I had an insatiable hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and most ardent desires for the light of God's countenance. I was most sensibly convinced of the justice of God in having withdrawn his presence from me, in times past, and left me to the dreary consequences of coldness and formality. I felt myself to be the guilty cause; and that it would be a wonder of mercy, if he ever again returned with favour and loving-kindness. The many and various reflections that crowded upon my mind, occasioned such distress, that it was with difficulty I attended to any secular concerns.

March 3. Continued distressed, sinking, as it were, under the insupportable burden of sin. The catalogue of my sins appeared without end and of most aggravated colour. My negligence as a husband, a father, and a Christian, pierced me to the heart.

Spent much of this day in serious conversation with my wife, children, and domestics. We rehearsed to each other, the goodness of the Lord to us, since our acquaintance, and particularly in recently arresting the attention

of every one in the family capable of moral reflection; and sung his praises together. We called upon our souls and every grateful power to magnify his holy name.

August 30. The birth-day of our third son.

Feb. 23, 1780. At this period, all the sensibilities of my soul were excited; having experienced a restoration from dangerous sickness, in circumstances peculiarly striking. No evidence was wanting to convince me, that it was in immediate answer to the prayers of my godly companions. My disorder was the same species of canker, which had proved fatal to my children; and I was so far gone, that my case was considered almost desperate; but I was very unexpectedly and suddenly relieved. Long did we remember the signal interposition of mercy, and sing the praises of our prayer-hearing God.

March 28, 1780. This day completed the fortieth year of my life, which gave rise to many cogent reflections. I called to my remembrance the unparalleled goodness of the Lord to me, in the chequered scenes of life through which I had passed. Also reflected, what poor advances I had made in the divine life—how much time (in a moral view,) I had lost—how little I had done for the glory of God—and what just reason had God to lament over me, as over his chosen people, and say, “Forty years have I been grieved with this” sinner. I applied with renewed importunity for grace to help in time of need.

Jan. 2, 1781. Our respected, godly minister, Mr. P——, was removed into the world of spirits, to receive the rewards of his indefatigable labours. This providence filled my mind with anxious solicitude for my family, the church, and the people of his charge.

Jan. 4. Paid our last respects to the remains of our never to be forgotten pastor.— This day, and the succeeding Sabbath, were melancholy days to me. The house in which I had taken such exquisite delight, in meeting the assembly of the saints, was now become (in a sense,) an empty place. The providence gave me lasting impressions of solemnity and engagedness in prayer for the healing of our breach.

Aug. 3, 1781. The birth-day of our eighth and last child.

Feb. 28, 1782. My little S—— had been declining in health for some time; but her disorder now rapidly increased, in opposition to all medical aid. My anxiety for her was extreme, and perhaps unwarrantable; but it was for the life of her soul. I was almost incessantly engaged in supplications; and felt such enlargement and fervency as I never experienced before. I conversed as much with her as her strength would admit, in hopes to find something encouraging in her moral views; but could get nothing except a few words expressive of her love to God.

March 10. Found that I could yield up my will, and say, "The will of the Lord be done."

She was scarcely able to converse, but voluntarily called upon us to teach her the Lord's prayer, and the catechism. Her mother asked her, if she loved God? She replied, Yes, ma'm. She was asked again, Have you a mind to go and live with him? After a short pause, she said, Yes, ma'm, I have a mind to go and live with my heavenly Father. About 10 o'clock, the family were called in, supposing that she was expiring; but reviving, she raised her head, and said she wanted to say the Lord's prayer, which she distinctly repeated. After panting for breath, she cried, *More*, and then repeated an evening prayer for children; and when she recovered her breath, still said, *More*, and then repeated a morning prayer after me. I then asked her, if she loved God? She said, Yes, sir. Do you wish to go and live with him? Yes, sir. I then prayed with her; and she gave me as good attention, as if she had been an adult. When prayer was ended, she again cried, *More*; but was so far spent, that she could not articulate distinctly. After resting awhile in slumber, she raised her feeble head, and, with a placid countenance, several times repeated, O my God! O my God! and then her voice faltered. On the 11th, she could scarcely speak intelligibly, but was, however, heard again distinctly to say, O my God! O my God! She looked us full in the face, and said, I love God. And from the motion of her lips, we judged that she attempted, several times, to repeat the same. Soon after, she re-

signed her breath, aged 4 years. We took our long farewell of her with resignation; and had the strongest confidence that she was going to be for ever with the Lord. This confidence arose not so much from any thing she had said in her sickness, as from our faith in the efficacy of prayer. We trusted in the mercy of a prayer-hearing God.

January 27, 1783. My dear companion was attacked with the rheumatism, which produced most distressing pain, and every alarming symptom.

March 3. The afflictive stroke of death, this day, left me to mourn the loss of the kindest of wives, and five affectionate children to grieve for the tenderest of mothers. And though I considered my loss irreparable in this world, yet I had the inexpressible consolation, that there was no occasion of mourning for her, but only for myself and children. To harbour a doubt of her being with Christ, would be tantamount to a disbelief of the Scriptures; for I had every testimonial of her interest in Jesus, which a life of peculiar conformity to their requirements, could give. She made few observations, in her last sickness, concerning her departure; for she had, as it were, said every thing in health. She had nothing to do but die. However, she said much to her children, counselling and admonishing them. She was told by a physician, that her case was desperate, which declaration she received with as much composure,

as if told it was time to go to church. She calmly replied, that it was a great thing to exchange worlds, and leave such a family as hers; but, if her time had come, the thought of death, or its consequences, did not terrify her. My constant resort, in this peculiar time of need, was at the footstool of Almighty Grace; and there I found help. I had, I trust, true submission of heart given me; and when I took her by the hand, to bid her the long farewell, was enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord."

[Having filled the space in the volume, which was designed for this part of the Memoir, the Compiler begs leave to state to the reader, that for the want of room, he has been obliged very greatly to abridge the Author's extract; and for the same reason, is now compelled to leave a large part of it untouched. And he would further state, from a perusal of the remaining part of the extract, that it exhibits more uniform enjoyment of the sensible presence of God, greater engagedness in Christian duty, growing conformity to the Divine character, and increasing fitness for the heavenly inheritance.]

LETTERS.



Amherst, February 4, 1779.

MY DEAR AND ONLY BROTHER,

PERMIT me to take the liberty of interrupting your thoughts with a few considerations, on a more interesting subject than commonly is wont to engross the attention of mankind. If they are needless, they can do no harm; and if any part of them should be reasonable, I hope you will do yourself the kindness to make a wise improvement of them. I desire to call up your attention to the dangerous risk we all incur, while unprepared to die. If you are ready, at any time, at any hour, to meet the king of terrors, you are a happy man; but if not, I pray you, my brother, to consider, and look around, and behold the situation you are in. You know that you must die; and how soon, you know not. You have lived to see many, in the prime of life, cut down in a few days. Have you considered what your situation would have been, if you had, among others, been called away by death, in the last sickness in town? Or have you duly reflected upon the mercy of God in sparing you? He has seen fit, in his gracious

providence, to spare you, not only through a time of special sickness, but to a day of the out-pouring of his Holy Spirit, when a number around you are working out their salvation with fear and trembling! And have not those who, in such a time, remain unmoved, and can see their neighbours and friends pressing into the kingdom of heaven, without being aroused to join them, great reason to fear that they shall be finally left of God to hardness of heart? This solemn season will, in all probability, soon close; and if you neglect the concerns of your soul now, where is the probability that you will attend to them in a time of stupidity? If you now say to the Spirit of God, "Depart from me," can you expect that he will then return, even if you should wish it? Is not the probability of your being awakened, every day decreasing, while you continue in sin? If perchance you should live to witness another revival, which is very uncertain, (as they usually occur but seldom,) will there not be far less probability of your being made a subject? The natural heart continually increases in hardness. Oh, my dear brother! did you but know the worth of time, as it is big with eternal consequences, it would be impossible for you to neglect a preparation for death, one day, or one hour. You feel the worth of time in regard to temporal concerns, and are diligent and industrious in its improvement, to gain a portion of the world, and provide for your body, which must so soon turn to dust.

and be laid in the ground for corruption : but do you make the same wise improvement of time for the salvation of your soul ? I pray you to consider the emptiness of worldly possessions ! What comfort would the possession of the whole world yield, when you come to be on your death-bed, viewing yourself just going to appear before the Judge of all the earth, to give a strict account of your past life ? One particle of grace will then be worth more than ten thousand worlds. It will then avail nothing, that you have lived a strict moral life, and kept yourself, or rather been restrained, from gross and heinous sins, if you are without grace. Consider the young man in the Gospel. When our blessed Lord told him what he must do to obtain the kingdom of heaven, he replied, “All these things have I kept from my youth up.” But Christ answered, “Thou lackest one thing yet.” Poor soul ! that one thing was all. He doubtless expected to be saved by his good works ; but when he found he must part with the world, he went away sorrowful ; and we receive no account that he ever returned more. Our hearts cannot be set upon God and mammon both : “Either we shall love the one, and hate the other, or cleave to the one, and despise the other.” If we will give our hearts to the world as long as we are capable of its enjoyment, what reason have we to expect that God will have mercy on us ? Read Prov. 1st, from the 24th to the end, and see what God saith of those who

will not hear when he calleth. If you think, as many seem to, that they can repent at any time, therefore there is no hurry about it, you grossly deceive yourself. When *can* there, when *will* there be a better opportunity? Your love to the world will never grow less, until the love of God is shed abroad in your heart. Depend upon it, you will never find your mind any more inclined to the work of repentance, than it is now, until you open your mind to conviction. If you cannot persuade yourself to set about the all-important concern now, you have no reason to think you ever can, or ever will. Oh, consider the worth of an immortal soul, which must exist for ever in heaven or hell! Who can comprehend its worth? How amazing is the fact, that every soul that has ever been dislodged from its tabernacle of clay, is now in heaven or hell! and that this will soon be the case, with you, and me, and all living. Yes, my brother, we shall all soon be inhabitants of one or the other of these very opposite abodes: either in the presence of God, where there is light without darkness; joy without grief; desire without denial; love without sadness; safety without fear; health without disease; a life without death; and an eternity of perfect blessedness in the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: or be thrust down to hell, to be the accursed companion of devils and damned spirits, and spend this unbounded eternity in indescribable misery; where the worm of conscience will

never die, and the fire of God's wrath will never be quenched. I beg you to consider, and let your mind be affected with a sense of what cutting and heart-rending reflections, gospel sinners will have, in looking back upon the life they have lived in the flesh. In this place of torment, they will have a clear and distinct comprehension of their whole life, and a very acute sense of the trifling nature and entire emptiness of those things for which they sold heaven, and the eternal happiness of their souls ! Alas ! how differently do they now view the unsatisfying enjoyments of time, riches, honour, and pleasure, from what they once did, when they despised faith in Christ, the true riches, and only coin which passes in heaven ! How will they curse their folly, when reflecting upon the warnings, counsel and advice they received from parents, friends, and faithful ministers of the Gospel, and more especially from God himself, by his Word and Spirit ! How will conscience flash upon them, and accuse them of wilfully neglecting and refusing his most faithful admonitions and rebukes ! How will their anguish increase upon seeing their former friends and acquaintance, and some, perhaps, whom they despised and scorned to associate with upon earth, seated at the right hand of Christ, with crowns of glory upon their heads, enjoying full stores of immortal pleasure ; and then to compare their exalted state with their own dreadful situation ! And perhaps too, the misery of the con-

trast will be heightened by the reflection, that their former advantages to obtain heaven were superior to many of those they behold in glory. How inexpressibly dreadful will be the fate of impenitent sinners! * * * *

Permit me, my dear friend and brother, again to entreat and beseech you to consider this most important subject. It is for your life, the eternal life of your soul, that I plead. If it were your temporal life that was at stake, there would be but little persuasion necessary to arouse you to action. But it is a matter of infinitely more consequence; as the life of your immortal soul is of more value than millions and millions of worlds. What can be so important to us, as the eternal happiness of our souls? How can I willingly lay down my pen, until I have persuaded you to make sure of an interest in Christ?

Oh that I could persuade you! that it were in my power! But I can only commend you to the mercy of God, begging him to come by the resistless energies of his Spirit, and make you willing in the day of his power, and bring you to a happy preparation for death and eternity.

Your affectionate Brother,

SETH COLEMAN.

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TO DOCT. AND MRS. S——, CLAREMONT, N. H.

Amherst, September 4, 1802.

I RECEIVED just a line from the Doctor, by Mr. C——; and it gives me no small sat-

isfaction to learn that you were all well. It always rejoices my heart to hear of the welfare of my absent children; and such are all of them; and for any thing that appears at present, they are ever like to be. My local situation is such, that it is inconvenient for any of them to reside me with, without injury to their pecuniary interest. And on that account, I can by no means wish it while I am able to provide for myself. If I should be suffered to live to see a time when I should not be able, I hope I shall have it in my power to reward them for the task. However agreeable it would be to me, to have at least one of them reside with me; yet, as Providence seems to order it otherwise, I endeavour to make myself contented; nor have I the least occasion to call in question the filial gratitude of any of them.

The Doctor mentioned your great desire to see us, and have us visit you this fall; the sincerity of which I do not doubt; but I doubt whether your desire is stronger than mine is to see you, and your little babes. If you have received the letters I have written this summer, you cannot wonder that I have not been up; for there has been no time since the death of E., when your mother and I have both been able to take the journey. I was attacked with my old pain in the breast, about the time of his death; and have not been entirely free from it one day since. About the 7th of Aug. it arose to that degree, that an inflammation in

the breast succeeded, and I had a severe confinement; and have been unable, ever since, to endure any hardship, by reason of debility. Your mother has had a very sickly summer; but appears to be mending. I hope, when the season changes, we shall get braced up again, so as to enjoy life better. We intend to make you a visit as soon as health and other circumstances will permit. In the mean time, we must content ourselves with epistolary conversation. It is uncertain whether we shall be allowed many more meetings in this world; and it is of little consequence, if we do but have a happy meeting before our final Judge. If we are but prepared to have that meeting in peace and joy, never, never more to be separated, it is comparatively of little consequence what our condition is in life. And although we are deprived of the satisfaction of addressing the throne of grace together, yet we may pray for each other, however distant our local situations. And I trust that neither of us neglect this privilege. I trust, too, that you will not suffer your increasing avocations to cause you to be unmindful of your dependence upon God for the supply of every blessing, temporal or spiritual. I trust you will be mindful of your duty to those committed to your charge, that, having faithfully performed it, you may be able to say, at the last great day, Here am I and the souls committed to my charge. Permit me to advise you, when worldly troubles arise, (as they will to all, in a

greater or less degree,) to look up to heaven, and consider that your main business here is to prepare for a residence there; to look down on the earth, and consider how small a portion you need, and how small a space you will soon occupy; to look abroad into the world, and observe what multitudes there are, in all respects, more unhappy than yourself; and this will teach you patience, humility, and contentment. Here you will learn where to look for solid happiness, where will be the end of all your cares, and how little reason you have to repine, or complain at any worldly disappointments. * * * * *

S. COLEMAN.



TO DOCT. AND MRS. S——, CLAREMONT, N. H.

Amherst, Sept. 29, 1804.

DEAR CHILDREN,

I RECEIVED the Doctor's favour by the hand of Mr. Church, and rejoice to hear of the improvement of your health, and that of the family. All family connexions this way enjoy comfortable health. F—— has returned in much better health than when you saw her. I anticipate a journey with her to Claremont in a few weeks, if nothing prevents. J. C. died the next Saturday after you saw him; but we have not learnt the circumstances of the family. The next Tuesday after you left us, E. B——d died with a fit of the apoplexy, in about eighteen hours from his being

taken. The next week, Mrs. W. of Hadley, died very suddenly in a fit. The next week, Capt. S. of the same place, followed her; and the first week in September, Mrs. R. of Amherst, was also called away. Thus the work of death is constantly progressing, without the prevalence of sickness. We had a letter from William, two or three weeks since: all well but S——, who is in a feeble state. The religious attention has rather increased in the north part of the town, since you left us. But I know of no particular attention in the south.

Permit your old parent to drop a word of advice to you both, by enjoining it upon you not to let the things of this world gain an ascendancy in your hearts. You cannot serve God and mammon. There is no such thing as enjoying the sweets of religion, unless we are crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto us; and we live above the world, while we live in it. Christ saith, that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. In order to know whether that is our condition, we must be much in meditation and self-examination. We are directed to watch as well as pray. Praying without watching, will be to little purpose. The only way to live happy, and die peaceably, is to have our eyes in heaven, the earth under our feet, and Christ in our arms; with our lamps trimmed and burning, and our loins girt about with truth; and then we may be said to be pa-

tiently waiting for the coming of our Lord and Master. I presume you are insensible of what the most of Christians lose, through a lukewarm, Laodicean frame of mind, through the love of carnal ease, and the want of assiduity in religion. On these accounts, they are all their life time "subject to bondage, through fear of death." I myself have lived years together, and have not taken the sweet consolation, nor enjoyed the real satisfaction, that I sometimes do now, in a day. We are a thousand fold paid in this world, for all the pains we take in religion. Oh, I long to have you know what it is to have the world, and all the busy cares of it, a burden to your mind; to have you attend to the concerns of time, as a matter of duty, rather than of choice! Oh how empty are all the enjoyments of the world, in comparison with communion with God! The Psalmist says, "'Tis sweet communing on my bed with my own heart and thee." I know not how to dismiss the pleasing theme, but time fails me; and I hope, by the leave of Providence, to see you soon, and converse in a more familiar and agreeable way.

S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT MIDDLEFIELD, MASS.

Amherst, June 25, 1798.

DEAR CHILD,

ALWAYS anxious for your prosperity, and especially for your eternal happiness, and

having but a moment's time to converse with you while at Middlefield, I take an early opportunity to write ; hoping, by a divine blessing, to lead your mind to salutary contemplation of those things which are infinitely more important than all earthly concerns. When you find your health impaired, you quickly repair to me for my advice, and are ever studious and prompt to follow my prescriptions : And now, when I refer you to the great spiritual Physician, for the health and well-being of your immortal soul, I beg you will not be less anxious to follow my directions. Oh listen, my child, to the faithful warnings of a tender parent ! consider first, that you must die sooner or later, and that an endless existence succeeds, the happiness of which, depends upon a preparation for this exchange of worlds. Oh consider, my dear child, how much will depend upon your improvement of this little niche of time ! Though you are now in health and vigour, and are insensible of the approach of your dissolution ; yet you will do well to consider, how many you have seen called from time by death, younger than yourself, in all the bloom of life. How many did you see called into eternity, two years ago, by the same disease with which you was visited, while you was spared ? Consider what would have been your present condition, if you had been made a warning to them, as they were to you ? Their fate is determined ! Oh that you might learn the lesson of wisdom presented you, at

the expense of others !—You are just setting out in the busy scene of life, and are yet free from those perplexing cares, which, in a thousand instances, prevent people from attending to those things which concern their everlasting peace, until they are for ever hidden from their eyes.

You will never, in future, have the leisure which you now have, to seek converting grace. If you live, you will probably soon be engrossed with worldly cares, &c. which will render it more difficult, every way, for you to enter upon a spiritual life. Repentance and reformation will be inconceivably more difficult, after habits of sin are deeply rooted in the mind. God is never so near with the influences of his Spirit, as in youth, when the mind is tender and impressible. But when the heart is increased in hardness, and almost callous to feeling, the prospect of repentance is faint. It leaves the work of an age to be performed in the most unfavourable time, and perhaps, in the awful period of sickness, which may be extremely short, and wholly dispossess the mind of reason, and hurry the spirit in an unexpected moment before the dread tribunal of the Judge. Consider, if you should be called away in your sins, what horror and amazement would seize your soul, to find yourself in a moment plunged into remediless despair, shut out from the presence of God, the holy angels, and glorified spirits. How would you bear to see many, whom you knew in this

world, in his kingdom, seated at Christ's right hand, drinking full draughts of immortal pleasure, and you yourself cast out: many of them, perhaps, who had warned and instructed you to flee from the wrath to come, and who had wrestled with God in prayer for you! Then to look around you, and behold yourself surrounded with devils and damned spirits, and know that you must continue in that awful company and awful place, for ever and ever! Oh, how do such lost souls gnash their teeth for anguish, when they consider that their season of mercy is for ever past; that the God who made them, will no more have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no pity; that the worm of conscience will never die, and the fire of God's wrath will never be quenched! Eternity! For ever and ever! Oh, what words! If multiplying the sands of this globe with the drops of the ocean, and these augmented by the drops of the morning dew, would comprehend the number of ages that lost souls must continue in misery, it would greatly diminish their torments; but when that vast time is expired, this amazing eternity is but just beginning to begin! Oh, will not these thrilling reflections arouse your sleeping conscience to a sense of your exposedness?

Consider, my child, what Christ hath done and suffered for a guilty world; how he left the realms of light and bliss, the bosom of his Father, descended into these lower regions, and subjected himself to all the shame and ig-

nominy which men and devils could invent, and finally, to the most painful and accursed death, to save us, poor sinners, from that death which we so justly merit : and that he is, in the Gospel, continually making an offer of himself, and all his purchased benefits, to sinful men ! One would think that the mere offer of eternal life to such rebels as we, would be most gladly received. But oh the hardness and stupidity of sinful man, who can turn a deaf ear to all the calls and invitations of the Gospel, when God condescends to woo, entreat, and beseech them to repent, return and live ; and says, “ Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die ? ” and in addition to all this, sends his good Spirit to awaken sinners to a sense of their guilt and danger, and influence them to come to Christ. Oh, the condescension and mercy of God ! It is a very precious time with a soul, when it is visited with the influences of God’s Holy Spirit. But if such an one neglects to improve these gracious influences, stifles the dictates of his conscience, and grieves away the Spirit, by listening to Satan’s lies, his case is most alarming. Some give way to the thought, that it is an unfit time ; that they have this and that to attend to ; some, that their merry companions will deride them : others think, that if they become religious, they must deprive themselves of all comfort in the world, by living a dull, melancholy life, as though religion had no comforts. This destroyer of souls sug-

gests a thousand false ideas of the kind, to persuade souls to put off to a more convenient season ; well knowing, that if he can get them to shake off their convictions, he has gained a great point ; that it will be more unlikely they will ever be impressed again ; or if they are, that it will be more easy to dissuade them from it a second time. God hath said, his Spirit shall not always strive with man. When God saith of any, as he did of his people of old, “ Let them alone, they will revolt more and more ;” then they will have no more concern about a future state ; but live and die as unconcerned as if there were no heaven or hell. Those who presume to shake off their conviction, and refuse the calls of God, may read what he saith of such, in the 1st of Proverbs, from the 24th verse to the end, which I request you to read, and treasure up in your mind.

I would recommend to your attention, four things : 1st. Be much in reading the Bible, which contains a perfect rule to direct souls to heaven. Next to that, read books upon religious subjects, laying aside all novels : let them have no place in your mind.

2d. In your leisure hours, frequently take retired walks in the fields and groves, and employ a portion of time in serious and devout meditation on death, judgment and eternity. Endeavour to have your mind affected with a sense of your lamentable condition. while exposed to eternal death, and how you will reflect

upon yourself, if you let this golden opportunity slip unimproved, and refuse to accept the Saviour who is now freely offered to you.

3d. Be frequent in prayer to God, that he would lead you in the path-way to heaven; that he would give you a sense of sin as committed against a holy God; work in you that genuine sorrow for it, which will lead to true repentance, and give you that peace of conscience, and joy in believing, which is unspeakable and full of glory. Presume not to omit retiring every morning and evening for secret prayer. As sinning is apt to make people leave off praying, so praying is apt to make people leave off sinning.

4th. Endeavour to attend strictly to all stated seasons for religion, both in the church and in the family, and in the closet. Avoid as much as possible, consistently with good manners, all gay and trifling company. Trifling conversation, if it is not vicious, has an hurtful tendency, diverting the mind from serious things. Our minds are naturally so prone to dwell upon trifling and sinful subjects, that we cannot be too watchful against outward incentives. We must be constantly upon our guard, strengthening the serious things that remain, that may be ready to die, lest Satan root up the seed sown in our hearts. If you cannot be accommodated with books in the family where you board, ask the favour of Mr. N----, who would be happy to oblige you, by lending some.

Time fails me, and I must conclude, wishing grace, mercy and peace to attend you through life ; that God would be pleased to take from you the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh, and create a right spirit within you ; that when Christ shall descend with the trump of God, you may belong to the first resurrection. This is the daily prayer of

Your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.



TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN FRIEND IN AMHERST.

Amherst, Jan. 15, 1806.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

Ardent to promote growth of grace in my own, and others' hearts, I have taken my pen to address you upon the all-important and interesting subject of religion. From the many pleasing testimonies I have heretofore had of your real love to Christ and his cause, together with the free and intimate conversation I have often had with you, upon the infinite importance of a due preparation for that unseen world to which we are, with such absolute certainty, hastening, and where we shall so soon have an unalterable destination, I am confident that you will not consider me unnecessarily officious in writing to you, at this time, upon the subject.—Divine and eternal things are of such infinite importance, that, upon a deliberate comparison, the concerns of

time and sense do indeed seem “nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.” In contemplating the worth of the immortal soul, we are immediately lost in wonder and amazement;—for our finite capacities are very inadequate to the vast comprehension of such a subject. And how are our ideas swelled, when we consider that this immortal spirit is to exist for ever and ever, in supreme happiness or supreme misery!—The soul of man is no less than a spark emitted from the essence of the eternal God, which, like rays from the natural sun, are reflected and refracted from object to object, finding no resting place, until they are either lost or return to their original source. So the revolting soul of man finds no resting place, until it returns to the God of its existence. It is restless, flying, in vain, from object to object, in pursuit of some satisfying good; but finds nothing that will yield a happiness equal to its craving desires, until it returns to its original Author, the fountain of all good. Sin hath obliterated the image of God from the soul; and not until it receives a re-stampment of this glorious image, does it know any thing of real happiness. When the Spirit of the Almighty breathes into it the breath of spiritual life, it begins to experience some faint prelibations, some slight foretastes of original happiness; and the nearer it approaches by sanctification to the Source of all good, the greater rest and satisfaction it finds; and then it may be said to “desire the sincere

milk of the word, that it may grow thereby ;” and to have “strong consolation, as those that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel.”

When the true Christian hath backslidden, and lost his first love, he always finds a vacuum in his soul, that nothing of a worldly nature can fill. The “aching void” is increased, until, by deep repentance and humble faith, he returns to his abused God, from whom he hath so shamefully revolted. There are many degrees of backsliding, but the least degree produces bitter fruits of remorse. Those who have experienced the painful consequences of this guilt, will most feelingly commiserate the condition of others in a backsliding state. David compares it to broken bones. How earnestly does he pray, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ; make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken, may rejoice ; hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities ; create within me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me ; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” And in the 6th Psalm, he cries out, “I am weary with my groanings ; all night make I my bed to swim ; I water my couch with my tears.” Many such mournings was the man after God’s own heart compelled to make, in the bitterness of his soul, under a sense of the loss of God’s counte-

nance. The first grades of backsliding ought to be most assiduously guarded against, as a deadly enemy.

May I not tell you, my young friend, that it is through fear of what may possibly be coming upon you, that I dwell upon this subject. Oh that I might, by the blessing of God, be the means of restoring you to the happy condition in which I have seen you in months past! That you have lost that freedom of speech upon the subject of religion, which you so happily possessed two years ago, I presume you will readily acknowledge; though perhaps you will say you love to hear others converse upon it as well as ever. But I beg leave to ask you, whether indeed you have the same solemn sense of eternity and eternal things, as you once had? Have you the same delight in the duties of religion? Do not smaller causes prevent you from joining in social prayer, and in the praise of God? Are you not more regardless of the worth of souls, and less desirous that others should be awakened and saved from the wrath to come? Do you not find that the duties of the closet are less agreeable than formerly? Do you not mingle with the thoughtless class of people, who think little of God and religion, with less disgust than you once did? Have you not in a measure lost a sense of the difference of character between saints and sinners? If these are the prominent characteristics of your present state of mind, must you not conclude, from your former ex-

perience, that you are, in some degree at least, fallen from your first love, and declined from your first zeal?—But why, my dear friend, why this remissness, and apparent lukewarmness? Alas! to what will it grow, if it is not checked in the beginning? I pray you to consider the infinite mercy of God, in plucking you as a brand from the burning, when you was heedlessly rushing on to destruction! Consider the wonderful love and compassion of that divine Redeemer, who spilt his blood and laid down his life to redeem you from eternal death! Are you willing to use your influence to have this Son of God crucified afresh, and put to open shame? When the Lord of life has done so much for you, will you not open your mouth in vindication of his government, and in behalf of his cause? Would you treat an earthly friend thus? The change in your conversation is construed by the profane world, as a tacit declaration that there is not so much in religion as you at first expected. Have they not just reason to conclude, that the flow of zeal and warmth of affections, in young professors, is only the effect of a heated imagination, and (as they say) a distempered brain? Oh, is not the saying of the Prophet made true by such declension, that religion has received its worst wound in the house of its friends? I pray you to bring to your recollection the feelings of your soul about two years ago, and compare them with your present exercises, and think if you have not

just reason to adopt the language of Job, and say, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness!" You then could say, it was sweeter to you to converse upon the dying love of a Saviour, than your necessary food; could tell what sweet communion you had in retirement, and in the holy ordinances; how constantly you walked in the light of God's countenance, and how refreshing to your taste was the word of his grace. Certainly there is a cause for this surprising change, and where shall we look for it? Is it not because you have never been made fully sensible of your dependence upon the sovereign grace of God, for the enlivening and animating influences of his Holy Spirit, and therefore had too much confidence in your own strength, and have not yet been made sensible of your weakness? But if you are a Christian, and not self-deceived, you will, in God's time, be brought out of this lifeless condition; but how much sorrow of heart you must undergo first, God only knows. You may be made to realize the truth of Solomon's observation first, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit, who can bear? The sooner you come to a sense of your condition, and exert yourself, the less will be your trouble and sorrow, and the easier your emancipation effected. You can gain nothing but additional sorrow by delay. Delays in spiritual con-

cerns are always attended with peculiar danger. Perhaps you are already alarmed, and begin to ask, What shall I do? Return, my friend, with all your heart unto your heavenly Father. He first brought you out of nature's darkness into his marvellous light; and if you look again to him with contrition of spirit, his unbounded mercy will be again exercised towards you. . Perhaps you will say, you cannot return. You cannot have too strong a sense of your inability. It has been a want of a sense of your own weakness, that has occasioned your fall. But come now and open your heart to a conviction of your guilt and ingratitude towards your kind Sovereign and Redeemer, who has bought you with his most precious blood. Consider how little you have done for that infinitely benevolent Redeemer, who hath done so much for you, and whom you are bound to serve with body and spirit, which are his. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. You must be deeply affected with your declension, and repent with humility and brokenness of heart, and your merciful Father in heaven will pity and forgive, and restore you to his divine favour. It is, indeed, painful to reflect upon the occasion of blasphemy which the backsliding of Christians affords; but sincere confessions, and repentance that is attested by future reformation and renewed obedience and meek and patient submission to the rebukes of their offended heavenly Father, may, in some degree, heal

the wounds their backslidings inflicted upon the cause of religion. Return then, my sister, and pray with David, "Examine me, O Lord; prove me; try my reins, and my heart." Let us be suspicious of our own hearts—they are deceitful and desperately wicked. Every Christian should be as suspicious of his heart, as David was of the Keilites. When he had every reason to suppose that he might put confidence in the fidelity of the Keilites, having before saved them in war; yet he so well knew the human heart, that when Saul was coming to Keilah to take him, he did not so much as ask them whether they would defend him; but immediately had inquiry made at the mouth of the Lord, and received an answer that convinced him of the justness of his suspicions. So we ought ever to repair to that God who knows the secrets of all hearts, and pray earnestly to have him open to our view the inmost recesses of our hearts, lest we roll some sin as a sweet morsel under our tongue, unrepented of. As a small leak will sink the greatest vessel, so one sin habitually indulged, without repentance, will ruin the soul for ever.—I trust you will excuse my plainness and freedom of writing, believing my motives to be disinterested and benevolent. Nothing could have induced me to be thus plain and faithful, but the hope of promoting your spiritual and eternal interests. Oh that I might see you raised, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, to the mount, where

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you may enjoy that sweet peace and consolation, that the world can neither give, nor take away. If these lines could be made of as real and lasting advantage to you, as a few words you once spoke, were to me, you will have much occasion to bless God for them.

Yours, in the fellowship of the gospel.

S. COLEMAN.

Amherst, June 16, 1806.

DEAR CHILD,

Being ever filled with the warmest anxiety for the spiritual, as well as temporal good of my children, I am constantly prompted to improve every opportunity to drop something that may, by the blessing of God, stimulate them in the all-important concerns of their soul's salvation. It is very affecting to see the awful insensibility of mankind, upon this momentous subject. By far the greater part, even of those who live under the clear sunshine of the Gospel, are willing to live in utter uncertainty about their future state. But this by no means lessens the importance of the subject. It ought rather to excite us to the greater diligence, to make our own calling and election sure, as well as to pray for them, and use all the means in our power for their awakening. Alas, for the stupid multitude! How presumptuously do they console themselves, with the idea, that, if they are finally lost, they shall do as well as others! How little do

they consider, that numbers, instead of diminishing, will only aggravate their misery? But their stupidity is not greater than that of the professor of religion, who has patched up a hope of an interest in the Divine favour, that will just serve to ease his mind, while death is at a distance, and the world goes well with him. But how often does the near approach of death, distress and affright him, and cause him to tremble, for fear of being at last lost forever! Oh, what would he then give for "an assurance of hope," and the precious light of God's countenance! Before, when the light of worldly prosperity and pleasure was enjoyed, this was little thought of; but now, in an extremity, he cries unto God. Ah! if the divine Saviour of sinners must cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" what little reason have such to expect that their abused God will hear and favour them? None ought to expect the favour of God, when in distress, who have neglected him when they were in ease and comfort. Life and health must be improved in the service of God, if we would have the consolations of his Spirit in sickness and death.

I have been obliged to suspend writing for a while, by reason of the eclipse of the sun. The earth covered with sackcloth by the interposition of the moon, is a striking emblem of the state of a Christian, when the cares or pleasures of the world prevent the light of God's countenance from shining upon his soul.

He is then filled with darkness. The stars now appeared to supply the place of the sun : so the Christian, in his hours of darkness, is often obliged to look back to his former experience for present consolation and support. But this is always wrong. In the darkest hour, he should never look back, to find his God ; but forgetting the things that are behind, should "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus." Many Christians look for the assurance of hope in an unscriptural way ; perhaps, from having some text of scripture brought to the mind ! or from some secret impression made on the mind by the Spirit of God. Dr. Elliot says, "You no where find it written in the sacred Oracles, that you are in a state of favour with God ; and although you were to hear an audible voice, or whisper, or secret suggestion, or strong impression, that this is your happy privilege, you may not depend upon it ; nor ought you to draw this conclusion, although you have some encouraging text of scripture brought to your mind. The scripture doth not point out the particular persons whose sins are forgiven, but only reveals the characters, marks, or qualifications, by which they are distinguished from others." Dr. Sherlock says, he knows "no signs of grace, but grace itself ; no sign of faith but believing ; no sign of temperance but the governing of our sinful inclinations ; no sign of being righteous but doing righteousness."

If you ask how you shall know what your state is, or what exercise of grace is a criterion by which you may determine that you have a sure title to the enjoyment of God in heaven, I will answer you in the words of Dr. Bellamy, in his Dialogues between Theon and Paulinus—See Dialogue 3, page 84. “We hope (he says,) to go to heaven when we die; so do many who will be finally disappointed. How shall we know that our foundation is good? Who can tell us? Surely none better than he who is to be our Judge. Could we ask our blessed Saviour, Lord, how shall we know? What would he say? Thanks be to God, we know what he would say, as surely as if he should answer us with an audible voice from heaven. He is of the same mind now, as when he dwelt upon earth. What he then taught, is left on record, plain for all to read, that none might mistake in a point of such infinite importance. Take your Bible; read your Saviour’s Sermon on the mount; and there you will see the character of a true Christian, drawn by an infallible hand; and find a text, by which you may safely try your state.” What it is to be disappointed in this concern, none can tell, unless they know the worth of an immortal soul; and *that* none ever did, or will know in this state. Had stupid mortals as great a sense of the worth of their souls, as the damned in hell have, they could not live as they do. It is madness in the extreme, for any to take up with a bare possibility.

ity, or even probability, in the room of assurance, since the mistake is irretrievable.

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A few weeks since, the people in this vicinity were distressed for fear of the consequences of the drought; but Providence, whose secrets mock our research, has put their anxiety upon that point to an end, by refreshing the earth with plentiful showers. On the first Sabbath in June, there was a storm of hail passed over Hadley from the north-west, that almost entirely destroyed the grain within its sweep; but was mostly confined to Hadley. It however destroyed some fields of grain in Belchertown. In Hadley, it destroyed upwards of seven thousand lights of glass. The Sunday before last, (which was the next after the storm at Hadley,) just as our assembly was dismissed in the afternoon, there came up a cloud from the north-east, with the most violent rain and hail I ever witnessed. The rain came down in torrents, accompanied with a violent wind, to that degree as to upset some carriages on the hill. The rain and hail came so thick, that it was difficult to distinguish things at a very short distance. The hail was of uncommon size, very ragged, and came with force that sent them near half across the meeting-house. There were upwards of an hundred panes of glass broken in the meeting-house. But the most of the storm was a little south. We suffered but little at our house. But some in the neighbourhood had an hun-

dred, some an hundred and thirty, and some an hundred and seventy panes of glass broken in their houses. The damage done to the grain is very considerable. Some fields are so destroyed, that the owners have turned in their cattle, &c. These things verify the saying of the Prophet, that when we cry peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh. We are most forcibly taught in these things, our absolute dependence upon Him who holdeth "the balancing of the clouds," and directeth the whirlwind and the storm.

While I have been writing, I have received information, that S. W. is drowned near G's Mill, at Patrick's swamp, (as it is called,) and was found accidentally, not having been missed, though it appears he was drowned last Friday. Thus the sons of men are caught in an evil snare, when they look not for it, when it falleth suddenly upon them. Thus we see how little safety there is for any that are not safely sheltered in the great ark of safety. Oh that such providences might be sanctified to those who are living careless of a preparation for death ! Without special sanctification, we are not to expect they will make any impression. Mankind "have Moses and the Prophets ; if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded if one should rise from the dead ;" much less when one goes to the dead. The departure of mortals from this, to the world of spirits, is so common, that the force of it is lost upon the careless mind. But the

sober, reflecting mind is solemnized by every recurring instance, and led to vigilance in watching for the coming of their Lord to them. I hope to hear from you by Mr. C——. Your Mother joins with me in the kindest regards to you, the Doctor, T——, and all the children.

From your affectionate father,
F— C—. S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, Sept. 9, 1806.

DEAR CHILD,

I received yours by Capt. H—, and think I feel grateful to that kind Parent, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, that he hath been pleased to restore your health. You mention your disappointment in not receiving a line from me by Mr. C——. But I was ignorant of his being in town. You must be satisfied of my ardent affection to all my children, and of my uniform intention of improving every opportunity to write to them. Surely no parent could more deeply regret the absence of his children, or more strongly covet constant personal intercourse with them. I sometimes consider my being deprived of their company, as a correction for not improving my time better while I had them with me. I find great reason to blame myself, for not paying that attention to instruct them, that I might have done, and, as appears to me, I should do

now, if I had the opportunity. And I find equal reason to reproach myself for my neglect of my own soul, in suffering the busy cares of the world to engross so much of my heart and time, as I have in years past. I have had more enjoyment the year past, than for several years before. I have been favoured with more leisure time to spend in my study, as it has been healthy, and my business small in comparison with what I have had in years past. I take great satisfaction in retirement in my study, reading and meditating. My eyes are now grown so much better than they have been for near fifty years, that I can read more in one day than I have been able to in four days, at any time, for forty years. I can read an hundred pages in a large octavo in a day with ease, and have done it in half a day. The alteration I attribute to the use of my dirty snuff box. My eyes have been gradually gaining ever since I began the use of macaboy snuff.

You doubtless remember what I told you of the consolation I received, under a certain judgment, last summer: this wrought so powerfully on my mind, that its good influence hath continued ever since; and, together with some special seasons of spiritual enjoyment, hath greatly enlarged my happiness the past year. If you have forgotten the passage of scripture I referred to in my last conversation, you will find it in the 6th of Matth. from the 24th verse to the end. It is fruitless for a Christian to expect to remove a cold Laodicean frame of

mind, by a few slight efforts, a few partial resolutions made without any proper sense of creature weakness, and dependence upon Christ's strength. Christ's direction is, to *strive* to enter in at the strait gate : (in the original, it is *agonize*.) The reason offered for *striving* is, because many shall *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able. If Christians would be as much engaged to keep their hearts alive in religion, as the miser is to fill his coffers with gold, or as the wicked are to promote the cause of wickedness, there would not be so many cold, indolent, worldly Christians as there are, to wound, instead of honouring the cause of religion. It is indeed matter of just lamentation, that many, who profess to love and serve God, are less zealous in his sacred cause, than the wicked are in the cause and kingdom of Satan, the destroyer of souls. No acquisitions of worldly good can be obtained without particular attention, labour and fatigue ; and yet mankind are so inconsistent, as to expect to obtain heaven, the pearl of great price, by a few lifeless wishes, or formal prayers. How absurd to give the warmth of the heart to the world, and expect that a slight regard will obtain the salvation of the soul ; when it cost the life of the Son of God, and is worth more than ten thousand worlds ! Alas ! how grovelling is the natural taste of mankind ! How sensual, yea, how devilish are our natures ! Surely, nothing short of the fountain of Jesus' blood can purify such polluted things. Oh, let us

have a constant sense of our daily need of applying to this fountain for heart cleansing.

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Yours, ever,
S. COLEMAN.

TO DOCT. AND MRS. S——, CLAREMONT, N. H.

Amherst, September 13, 1806.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

IT is pleasing information you give me of the prospect you have of re-settling the gospel ministry among you. I rejoice with you. All the civil magistrates in a county, were they collected in a town, could not do so much to regulate a society, as a faithful minister will do by his precepts, and concurrent examples. It is almost impossible to preserve and regulate the morals of a family, without the regular attendance of public worship on the Lord's day. This is God's appointed way; and whenever people neglect the observance of it, they immediately descend into loose and irregular practice.

I rejoice much at the prospect you have of an out-pouring of the Spirit of God. The description you give of the situation of your town, looks like the ushering in of a work of God's Spirit. A revival of religion is a trying time for Christians. It is like a refiner's fire, to distinguish between real gold, and counterfeit. Those who have any oil in their lamps,

will have them lighted up, at such a time. If the coals upon your hearth are ever so dead, yet, if you put a live one in the midst, and blow with the bellows, you will soon see them burning; but without a live coal connected, you could never produce fire among the dead ones, by blowing ever so long, or hard. It is a time of as great stupidity and deadness here, as ever I knew. There is the shadow of a few meetings kept up, and that is all. Even old Christians are mostly fallen asleep. There are but few to be found, who converse freely on practical religion. There is a mighty shaking among the dry bones in Northampton. I am told there appears to be a general flocking to the standard of king Jesus, from among the younger class of people. There have been about fifty added to their Church, on their two last communion days. God is doing great things for his Church in the world. It seems as if the time was fast advancing, when the islands of the sea shall rejoice, and the barren wilderness become vocal with the high praises of God. But there may, and probably will be, an awful falling away, before the Gospel of Christ becomes general in the world. In those "perilous times," the enemies of the truth will come in like a flood, and scepticism and infidelity will no doubt so far triumph, as to promise a conquest, and cause the good Eli's of the age to tremble for the ark of God. But the struggles of Satan's kingdom will only serve to

make the power, and final triumph of sovereign grace, the more conspicuous. All will at last be obliged, like the worshippers of Baal, to acknowledge, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." * * * *

S. COLEMAN.

TO MRS S——, CLAREMONT, N. H.

Amherst, Sept. 20, 1806.

MY DEAR CHILD,

A CHRISTIAN parent can never take so great satisfaction in his children, as when he sees them walking in the truth. And in order that he may have that satisfaction, when they are gone out into the world, it is necessary that he should early teach them the necessity of imbibing virtuous sentiments, and preserving virtuous habits. He should often, and faithfully, instil into their tender minds, the necessity of early piety, and prayerfully endeavour to lead them to an experimental acceptance of Christ. Their good estate, for time and eternity, very much depends upon the precepts and example of their parents. You will find God's direction for constant instruction of children, in Deuteronomy xi. 19. Speaking of his commandments, he saith, "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Children can learn to play, and manage a thousand toys with ingenuity and

dexterity ; but they cannot learn any useful employment without labour and pains. They cannot learn to read, without diligent attention, for years. They cannot acquire the knowledge of a useful trade, without keeping their hands and minds engaged in it for a long time. Hence no pains or expense are spared. But how few are there, even among professing Christians, who take as much pains to instil into the minds of their children, the principles and doctrines of the Christian religion, as they do to teach them the arts and sciences ! (not to say labour.) And yet, when their children grow up, and neglect to walk in wisdom's peaceful paths, become immoral in their conduct, and unprincipled in their sentiments, they are wont to cast all the blame on them, without once inquiring whether their neglect of properly instructing them in early life, hath not been the real cause of all their trouble.

My child, I drop these few hints, that if your children should live to go out into the world, you may not have as great reason to chide yourself for your neglect of them, while they were under your eye, as your old father has. When I take a retrospect of my past life, and my neglects in the instruction of my children, it appears to me, that if I were to act the scene over again, I should be more diligent and faithful in the performance of my duty to them. But alas ! so little are our hearts to be trusted, perhaps I should be more deficient than ever. It is difficult for people to know what manner

of spirit they are of. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” and the Apostle adds, “who can know it?” It is matter of just lamentation, and ought to be for a lamentation, that Christians, or those who profess Christianity, are not so much engaged to promote the cause of Christ among men, as the wicked are to promote the devil’s cause in the world. The zeal of the latter, if employed in the cause of religion, would effect wonders. We might soon expect to see an universal turning to the Lord, the wilderness budding and blossoming like the rose, and the glorious standard of the Cross erected upon Pagan ground. But alas! how few professors, and even of those whom charity would number among the true children of God, are as much engaged to promote religion in their own souls, in their families, and in the world, as they are to procure the perishable things of time and sense! And yet, how often are such heard to complain of coldness, and want of evidence of being in the favour of God! &c. And well they may; for they take but little pains to have it otherwise. This world’s good things are never procured without industry; and hence they will rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, to obtain them, while but little effort is made for the favour and blessing of Heaven! And how absurd is it for them to complain of the want of spiritual comforts, when they are sought with such indifference, merely as things by the bye, that

are wanted only when the world has no enjoyments to bestow ! Our Lord's direction is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." But most, alas ! seek first the things of this world, and give God only the poor dregs of time, such as the world can spare without inconvenience ; and while they are thus robbing God of his due, they are often complaining of his absence and distance from them. How perfectly inconsistent ! Christ saith, I am with you, while you are with me. If a person has a valuable plant in his garden, will he not be often loosening the earth about it, and plucking away the weeds, that the rays of the sun may not be obstructed, without which it may support vegetable life, but will bear no fruit ? And shall not the cultivation of grace in the heart be attended to, when it will not grow and flourish while the cares of the world are suffered to fill the heart, and obstruct the rays of the Sun of Righteousness ? Our Lord has told us, Ye cannot serve God and mammon. The world, or Christ, will be uppermost in the mind. The heart is like a pair of balances ; when God rises in it, mammon sinks ; and when mammon rises, the cause of religion and the love of God sinks. But Christ will never divide with the world. He must have the whole of the heart and affections, or nothing is of any account. Without this, he will not take up his residence in the soul. He saith,

“Son, give me thine heart.” “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, (that is, the heart,) I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Precious promise! Why should we value it so lightly? Why should the baubles of time, the fleeting trifles of an hour, attract our desires, when such noble, such elevated enjoyment is proffered by the “King of kings and Lord of lords”? Alas! this degraded nature, how it strives and pushes the warfare against the spirit! How necessary to be clad with the whole Christian armour, that we may be able to withstand the wiles of the adversary, and the treacherous propensities of our own hearts!

I do not write upon these things to you, my dear child, thinking to communicate any new idea; but because I am so sensible that we need, on account of our stupidity, to be frequently reminded of those things, which we well know in theory, in order that we may put them in habitual practice.—Let us lay aside every weight, with which our flesh, and a tempting world, would retard our Christian progress, and run with patience the race set before us, that we may be sure to win the heavenly prize. And may we at last be able to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to

me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I have it in contemplation to visit you before winter, if I can get my domestic concerns out of the way in season. But it will be attended with so much uncertainty, that you must not anticipate it too much.

Your Mother joins with me, in the tenderest regards to all the family. Please to remember me to all friends.

Yours, affectionately,

S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, April 13, 1807,

DEAR CHILD,

SENSIBLE of your fondness of hearing often from your old parent, and anxious also, to gratify my parental affection, I readily improve this opportunity of writing to you. Our family connexions this way, are, I believe, in usual health. I trust you will join with me, in rendering a tribute of praise to the Father of mercies, who hath once more restored a comfortable measure of health to such an unworthy, ungrateful creature, as I am. I have never before had a similar fit of sickness. I was once brought as low, but was raised much sooner. It is but a few weeks since I have got to be really comfortable. My illness commenced about the first of De-

cember. Its appearance and departure were gradual. I expect always to be subject to such turns, while I remain in this tabernacle of clay. * * * * *

I have had no letter from your brother E. B. since the twenty-first of June. He mentions that the news of Doctor Fitch's death was almost too much for A—— to bear. Her affectionate heart was almost overcome. Such painful strokes of separation must be felt, while in this mortal state. But there is a state of blessedness, to which believers in Jesus are fast hastening, where sorrow and sighing shall be no more for ever.

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There is an awful putrid disorder prevalent in this part of the country : and I am informed, also at the eastward, which puts a period to the lives of many, in the most sudden manner. Mr. E. U, who you recollect once boarded with us, died in a most surprising manner, last Saturday night. He was taken in the afternoon, with slight complaints, and expired before morning. The corpse was so putrid before they could lay it out, that they were obliged to wrap it in a tarpawling. This providence was the more striking, on account of the daring profanity, which, it was said, he used the day before he died. The observations I would not mention, but they were expressive of his infidel sentiments. What sensations of horror do such events produce in minds of those who believe in the scriptures !

Oh that this affecting providence might have a salutary effect upon his associates!

There is but little conversation to be heard, among any class of people this way, but upon the subject of politics. Religion seems to be going out of fashion, as though the concerns of the kingdom of Christ had lost their importance. The number of those in the circle of my acquaintance, who appear to be delighted with religious conversation, is very small; and among that precious few, I cannot name more than one, who retains that degree of animation, which they had a few years since.

But the importance of the subject does not diminish with our feelings. Dying work does not cease to go on, eternity does not shorten, heaven grow less happy, or hell more tolerable, because stupid mortals live careless about them. The delay of death never lessens the importance of a preparation, but much increases it; as it lays us under the greater obligations, which, if misimproved, will increase our condemnation. The longer our day of probation is continued, the more we are ripened for heaven or hell. This solemn consideration ought to arrest the attention of every rational mind, and might well occupy his thoughts, by night and by day, wherever he goeth, or whatever his employment may be. But vain men put far off the evil day, imagining that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant; and so live along in a self-flattering dream, until the hail of

death sweeps away their refuges of lies, and they are plunged deep in remediless despair. My time fails, and I cannot enlarge. I do not intend that any thing shall prevent my seeing Claremont this summer, but sickness in the family. Your Mother joins, as usual, in sentiments of affection, to you and all the family.

Yours, &c.

S. COLEMAN.

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TO HIS SON E—— B——, AT CANANDAIGUA.

Amherst, May 7, 1807.

MY DEAR BEREAVED CHILD,

I HAVE received yours of 23d of April, replete with sorrow and grief. I do heartily condole with you under your very great loss. Personal experience makes me know how to pity you. But still, I must caution you against excessive indulgence of grief. I am not insensible, that it is an aggravating circumstance, that you are altogether among strangers; nevertheless it appears that many of these strangers exercise all the tenderness of friendship towards you, and manifest the kindest wishes, to afford all the comfort and consolation in their power. This must be in a measure soothing; but, alas! it is not in the power of mortals to supply the vacuum, which such a stroke must make in your breast. Encompassed with ever so many kind friends, still, you must feel yourself alone. God's

presence, and the light of his countenance alone, can satisfy a mind like yours, under such a bereavement. But this he is ever ready to give, to those who seek it in faith. Although God, in the all-wise dispensations of his providence, has seen best to take from you the desire of your eyes, and cause you to sigh out the mournful complaint, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness;" yet you ought to be consoled with the idea that your loss is her gain; that while you are in tears, she is rejoicing in the company of God, Christ, Saints and Angels. Oh, the superiour happiness she now enjoys in heaven, where faith is swallowed up in perfect vision, and hope in the fruition of all those heavenly joys, which mortal "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, or the heart of man conceived." With every reason to believe that this is her glorious state, would it not be cruel (even if it were lawful,) to wish her back again in this state of sin and suffering? "God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, but are as high above them as the heavens are above the earth." The dispensations of divine providence contain a depth of wisdom, so far surpassing the comprehension of our finite minds, that we should not presume to open our mouths in surprise or complaint. You will do well, often to call up to your mind the last advice of your dying companion, and endeavour to exercise the Christian grace of patience;

praying abundantly for entire resignation to the Divine will, however it may cross your worldly wishes and pleasures. Strive to retain that frame of spirit, that will lead you to say, under every trial, "not my will, but thine be done." If you are a child of God, the stroke you have received, though so very heavy, is a Father's rod, laid on not in anger, but in love. He corrects you with the benevolent view of bringing you nearer to himself. I wish you to read Hebrews xii. from the 5th to the 11th inclusive; and may God by his Spirit, enable you to apply it to your own case, and bless it for your comfort and consolation. It appears, by the account you give of the exercises of her mind, on a dying bed, that you have no cause to mourn for her, but for your own sins, which, doubtless, have been the procuring cause of the sore visitation. You ought carefully to examine your heart, and if possible, find out the Achan that provoked a just and holy God to come out against you, in such a grievous stroke. To assist you in this important investigation, I would suggest the consideration, whether your affections have not been inordinately placed upon your bosom friend, and she been suffered to take up that room in your heart, which Christ claimed as his due? Christ will never suffer a rival in the hearts of his children, without giving tokens of his displeasure. If any thing is suffered to usurp the throne, in a Christian's heart, he is often pleased to remove the object from his

enjoyment, or, in some other way, according to the dictates of infinite wisdom, to inflict chastisement for the sin of idolatry. I very naturally anticipate the great danger you will now be in, of idolizing your tender babe, as it is the only surviving branch of your beloved mother, whose image you say it bears. This circumstance will be sufficient of itself, to endanger you. You will do well to be upon your guard. These little tender plants are all great thieves, and very insensibly creep into our hearts, and take undue root, before we are aware of it. If you are still so untoward, as to relapse into this sin, while under the very stroke of your heavenly Father's rod, you must not be surprised, if you receive still further marks of his displeasure, and see the dear babe removed to its mother. When he begins to deal with his children in a judicial way, he usually lays on the stripes, until the object of his gracious intention is answered, and the disobedient child is restored. But I earnestly hope that your affliction may be sanctified to your soul, and that you may learn by happy experience, what it is to have "tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience that blessed hope that maketh not ashamed;" but raises the soul to a holy triumph over created enjoyments, and supports it even through the valley of the shadow of death.

I must earnestly enjoin it upon you, to pay particular attention to your health, when the

hot season comes on, and be careful not to extend your labours beyond your strength. I shall think it strange, if you can attend to your school, and preach too, which I am afraid you will attempt, until you are unable to do either. If you must relinquish one, I should advise you to leave preaching for the present. You may, and perhaps will, do more good to your generation, and promote the cause of Christ, as well in your school, as in the desk. A foundation for piety is ordinarily laid in childhood, or youth; therefore your sphere of usefulness, in your present situation, is great.

I shall be very anxious to see you, and hope, if we live, you will not fail of visiting me in the summer or fall. If your child should live, you must bring it with you. Perhaps Mrs. B——, wishing to see her friends this way, will accompany you, and take charge of the dear babe.

I have worried through a winter of pain. For six successive Sabbaths I was absent from the house of God. The like I have never experienced for near fifty years, on my own account. But I have great cause to bless God that he has kindly interposed, and given me the enjoyment of my usual health and privileges. Oh that they might be more assiduously improved in his service! I must bid you adieu for the present; praying, which I do daily, that you may hereafter say with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been.

afflicted, for thereby I have been taught to keep thy righteous statutes."

Your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.



TO DOCT. AND MRS. S——, CLAREMONT, N. H.

Amherst, May 15, 1807.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

HAVING lately written to F——, and having nothing in particular to communicate, I declined a late private opportunity ; committing what little I had to say, to the Rev. Mr. B——, to be delivered verbally. But alas ! how soon has a most afflictive providence hastened me to improve the opportunity ! We live in a changing world. Man appoints, but God disappoints. We never know what tomorrow will bring forth. The dispensations of Providence are to us, (short-sighted creatures,) an unfathomable deep.

I received a letter yesterday from your brother E—— B——, at Canandaigua, which was replete with sorrow and affliction. Your sister A—— C——, his beloved wife, is gone to the land of silence : she is no more ! Her exit took place about 2 o'clock, A. M. on the 21st of April. With regard to the circumstances of her death, your brother gives but a slight account : his feelings not permitting him to dwell upon them. He has promised them in his next. When received, I will transmit them to you.

Thus, in addition to what we see daily around us, we have an affecting instance, in our own family, of the fallacy of trusting in creature comforts, or created objects. I pray God, it may more effectually wean us from this vain world, and attach us more decidedly to heavenly and eternal things. Diseases and death are the common lot of all. Though in the midst of life we are in the midst of death, yet we stupid mortals are apt to flatter ourselves that "to-morrow will be as this day, and much more abundant." Oh, how true is it, that we never know what a day may bring forth, and that we are sure of no time but the present moment !

We should do well to put the question to ourselves, morning and evening, Am I ready to meet death this day, or this night ? If we should constantly adopt this practice, it would tend to make us sober and serious ; and, familiarizing our minds to the subject of death, would prompt us to be on our watch and guard that we may be ready for the solemn summons. Our blessed Lord directs us to strive to make our calling and election sure ; but we are prone to rest contented with a probability, instead of an assurance ; being more solicitous for the meat that perisheth, than for that which endureth unto eternal life. Many who have true grace in their hearts, lose the comfort of it in this world, because they make so little exertion for more. They are languid in the cause of religion, and so

live "all their life-time subject to bondage, through fear of death." But more prayerfulness, watchfulness, and earnest endeavours to bring their hearts to the touch-stone of God's word, would enable them to get that assurance, that would make them comfortable and happy all their days. It is fruitless for any to think to extricate themselves from a cold Lacedæmonian frame, by a few lazy wishes; but if Christians would be as much engaged to get grace, as the men of this world are to possess its treasures, we should see less despondency among them, and more sensible enjoyments from day to day, and year to year. But they will tell us, that grace is the gift of God, and it is not in their power to obtain it of themselves. Very true; it is the gift of God; but does not God say, "I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them?" The wise man saith, "Search for wisdom, (or grace,) as for hid treasure." Christ tells us to strive to enter in at the strait gate: in the original, it is agonize; denoting the greatest exertions, and most strenuous endeavours. If our value of spiritual blessings is not sufficient to prompt us to diligence in the use of God's prescribed means for their attainment, we are indeed in a dangerous condition. If we are not disposed to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, and seek and strive to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, it is to be feared that we are without a scriptural hope, and without a reconciled God in the world.

I do not dwell upon these subjects, thinking to communicate any new ideas ; but because I know from experience, that we are such stupid creatures, that when engrossed in the cares or pleasures of the world, we have need to be often reminded of the things with which we are well acquainted. Truths, that so intimately concern the well-being of our immortal souls, are not the less important for being common. Oh let us, my dear children, have our minds always deeply impressed with these all-important things, that when our Lord and Master shall call for us, we may not be found sleeping with the foolish virgins in the Gospel, but watching with the faithful servant, having our eyes in heaven, the earth under our feet, and Christ as it were in our arms. Let us have our loins girt about with truth, our lamps trimmed and burning, and continue in the attitude of expectation and readiness; that, when called to appear before the bar of God, we may boldly launch forth into the Jordan of death, confident of finding a kind Advocate interceding for us at the right hand of God, who will conduct us to a happy seat, eternally to drink full draughts of immortal pleasure. May God, of his infinite mercy, through the merits of his Son, grant that this may be your wisdom and happiness, and that of all your children. This is the daily prayer of your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS SON E ——— B ———, AT CANANDAIGUA, N.Y.

Amherst, May 18, 1807.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE lately received your favour, dated April 29, and esteem it a happy circumstance in your location, that we can have such direct and quick conveyance to each other, over such a length of way, and so speedily sympathize with each other in affliction. I sent a lengthy letter by the last mail, which you will doubtless receive before this comes to hand. In that, I endeavoured to lead your mind to some salutary reflections, and influence you to seek that divine support, which would soothe and comfort you. But by the tenour of your letter, I fear that you are in danger of suffering your passions to overpower your better judgment, and yielding your spirits a prey to excessive grief, until your health will sink under it, and your future usefulness be greatly restricted, if not entirely destroyed. We may (and many actually do,) mourn for the loss of friends, to that degree, and with that spirit of disobedience, that destroys their health, and provokes a holy God to inflict new judgments on them. His stripes are usually repeated upon his children, until they submit quietly to the punishment due to their sins. I do not say this, my child, because I think you feel a disposition to murmur and complain of the providences of God toward you. But I would

warn you of the danger, and persuade you to perfect acquiescence. Be careful that you do not wound the cause of religion by a conduct that will, in the eyes of the world, excite imputations of a murmuring spirit. The pious Psalmist, when bereft of his darling child, anointed his head, and washed his face, and sat down and eat bread. In the 131st Psalm he saith, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a weaned child." This is admirably descriptive of Christian submission.

We cannot live with the dead : our business is with the living : and when the will of the Lord is made known to us, it is our duty to submit quietly, however we may have our fleshly passions crossed. I pray God, that this heavy stroke of affliction may prove a stimulus to us all to be more assiduous in a preparation to follow those, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. Of this number, we have just reason to believe, your dear consort is one. You ought to consider what an insupportable weight would be added to your load, if you were obliged to mourn without hope ; and what grateful returns you should make to the Disposer of events, that he was pleased to give you such satisfactory evidence of her faith in Christ, before her death. He might have deprived her of the exercise of her reason, and taken her away in delirium, and not suffered her to pray the benediction of Heaven on you and the dear babe, in her dying

moments. If we will exercise our reason, we can always see many alleviating circumstances in our severest afflictions. Judgments are seldom unmingled with mercies ; and we should be ungrateful, indeed, to be so absorbed with the one, as to forget the other. Our heavenly Father knows our weakness and infirmities, and will never lay upon his children one stripe more than he sees necessary to bring them home to himself.

You have frequently mentioned, how many kind friends you have found among entire strangers. I congratulate you upon the goodness of God to you in such an essential blessing ; and hope you may also experimentally know the truth of the wise man's observation, that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Just as I had written the above, I received yours, which brings intelligence of the death of your babe. What I greatly feared, is come upon you. Oh that you may be enabled to say with good old Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good !" God, in his most holy providence, is causing you to drink deep of the wormwood and the gall, in the early period of life. It may be that he is trying you in the furnace of affliction, to fit you for more eminent usefulness in his service ; and I hope you may come out as gold seven times purified. Many of God's servants of old had to encounter trying circumstances, to gain qualifications for his service. I hope you will

not fail to make a wise and profitable improvement of these afflictive dealings. Let them serve to wean your affections from all terrestrial enjoyments, and fix them more firmly upon heavenly and divine things. Your experience has been amply sufficient to convince you of the fleeting nature of earthly happiness, and the uncertainty of human prospects. May the lesson effectually preserve you from ever being flattered with the most promising appearances of present enjoyment. Let your hopes and expectations be fixed above. Aim at an inviolable walk in the path of duty, and, without solicitude, leave events and consequences with Him, who has a perfect knowledge of what is best for us, firmly believing that his justice is equal to his knowledge, and that the Judge of all the earth will do right. * * *

If love to God prompt you to a studious fulfilment of his commandments, you need fear no evil; for his promise is sure, that all things shall work together for good to those who love him. * * *

S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, June 1, 1807.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

BEING ever fond of gratifying your innocent desires, and especially your filial affection, I was unwilling to let so favourable an opportunity pass unimproved. I have no very

interesting communication to make ; but it is a pleasure to write to you, for the sake of writing.

I have received four letters from your brother E—— B——, since the death of his wife, the last of which was dated May 16. Your brother's health had declined since experiencing his severe trial ; probably, in consequence of inordinate grief. S— C— said, however, that he bore his affliction as well as could be expected, considering the aggravating circumstances of her death, and his local situation, being in a land of strangers. I have written to him several times, endeavouring to pour into his afflicted bosom the oil and wine of religious consolation. He expects (by the leave of Providence,) to return to New-England in October or November next, and considers it uncertain whether he returns to that country or not. But knowing how much you will wish to become acquainted with all the particulars respecting his situation, and the death of his wife, I will transcribe a part of one of his letters ; choosing to give the account in his own words, rather than my own. He writes thus :

‘DEAR PARENT,

‘THE melancholy tidings of the decease of your dear daughter, and my beloved wife, I suppose have not yet assailed your ears. May God prepare your heart, and enable you to submit with true resignation. I am indeed

called to drink deep of the bitter cup of affliction; but it is no more than I deserve, for I am a sinner. Oh, may I be enabled to acquiesce with that filial submission, which becomes a disciple of Him, who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief!" and who, by precept and example, taught us, in every situation, to say, "The will of the Lord be done." As I gave you but a short sketch of the circumstances of her death, in the letter which you will probably receive before this, and knowing that you will be extremely anxious to become acquainted with every particular, relative to this mournful providence, I shall now attempt, though with a heavy heart, to relate some of them.

'A——, except being somewhat troubled with the heart-burn, was as comfortable as we could expect her to be in her situation, until the 16th of February, when she was attacked with a severe colic and dysentery, which were very obstinate; and indeed, the latter, or something resembling it, never left her until she died. About a fortnight after she was thus attacked, she was taken with the fever and ague; and not long after, with a severe cramp. Under these complicated complaints, she made free use of opium, which was the only thing that gave her any considerable relief. She was confined on Thursday morning, the 16th of April, and was very comfortable. Her child was very small, weighing only three pounds and an half, when fully dressed; but

yet appeared uncommonly well for so small a child. She continued very comfortable until Saturday morning, when she had a distressed turn; but was soon relieved. Sabbath morning, she was quite comfortable, so that I went to Easton and preached. But when I returned at evening, found her much altered; called in her physician; but medical prescription had no effect: she continued to fade through the night. Monday morning, I began to despair; and called in other physicians to advise. Every thing was done through the day, which we supposed could be of any advantage; but in vain: she was too far gone to be restored: she continued to fail until two o'clock on Tuesday morning; when, with inexpressible sweetness, she closed her eyes upon us; and (as we have good reason to believe,) fell asleep in Jesus, and was received to those mansions of bliss and glory, which God hath prepared for them that love him. In her last hours, she was calm and serene; conversing with that composure which becometh the Christian: and with the same admirable composure, took her leave of those female friends that stood around her bed; thanked them warmly for all their kindnesses; and observed, that the only return she could make them, was a grateful heart. She took her little babe on one arm, and putting the other around my neck, gave us her dying blessing—prayed that the babe might live to be a blessing to me, and that I might be enabled to train it up in the

“nurture and admonition of the Lord”—commending us both to the care of Heaven ; and most earnestly prayed that every blessing, spiritual and temporal, might rest upon us. When she saw me distressed, she constantly enjoined upon me the duty of *resignation*. In all her conversation, she wore the same pleasing smile upon her countenance, with which it was always adorned in health ; and some of her last words were, “I am going to my dear Parents.”

“Jesus can make a dying bed

“Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

‘My feelings in this trying hour, I must leave you to conceive ; for no language can express them. To see my companion going into the eternal world, leaving me a little infant babe ; and I, three hundred miles from all family friends, was almost insupportable.

‘But I should not be unmindful of my many mercies. Though we were among strangers, yet we were surrounded with kind friends. The ladies in the village appeared to be much attached to A—— ; uncommonly so, considering their short acquaintance with her. Indeed, they seemed to vie with each other, in administering kindnesses to her, in her last sickness. Mr. and Mrs. B—— were surprisingly kind : they treated us more like a brother and sister, than like strangers. And to heighten and complete all her other goodness, Mrs. B—— has taken the little precious babe

to her own breast. Her babe being eleven months old, she intends to wean it, and keep mine. May God, of his rich grace, abundantly reward her with gifts, more precious than I can bestow. This was the ardent prayer of my deceased friend, and will continue to be mine, until gratitude shall cease to inspire my heart.

‘The funeral was attended on Wednesday, by a large concourse of people from the neighbouring towns, and from the village. There was a prayer made at the house; after which the procession moved to the courthouse, where a sermon was delivered by the Rev. Mr. H——, of Bloomfield.

‘I took my final leave of the precious remains, and laid them in the grave at five in the afternoon.

‘Oh, the invaluable, the irreparable loss I have sustained, in losing such an amiable, excellent, pious partner! May God, of his abundant mercy, sanctify the severe providence to me; for my spiritual good, that my heart may be more weaned from this sinful world, and more placed upon heavenly and divine things. Oh, may it lead me to have my lamp trimmed and burning, that I may be ready whenever my own solemn summons shall arrive!

‘My heart is full; and should I give way to my feelings, I might cover many a sheet; but both time and health oblige me to forbear.’

He had her miniature taken the day after she died; and it is thought it will be a good likeness. It is yet unfinished. He had then stopt preaching for the present.

Providence is frequently lessening the number of our friends and acquaintances by death. And while one is falling on the right hand, and another on the left, happy will it be for us, if we can so hear the voice of God in the providences, as to be stimulated to an habitual readiness for our own solemn summons. How forcible is the language of these frequent deaths! "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." In order to be in habitual and actual readiness for the hour of death, it is necessary that we live constantly with our loins girded about, and our lamps trimmed and burning, that when our Lord cometh, we may open to him joyfully. Christ saith, "Blessed are those servants, whom, when their Lord cometh, he shall find watching." His direction is, to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. Prayer is of very little avail, unless we watch too, with vigilance. The Psalmist says, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." Consideration is always the first step towards reformation: Therefore, let us think on our ways, and remember how soon we must die.—We have had fifteen most sudden and surprising deaths in this town, within about four years past; but it produces no visible effect upon the living. If, in the time of

the old Indian wars, the Indians had come as often, and killed a person each time, the inhabitants would have been so intimidated, that they would not have dared to sleep in their beds, or walked abroad, without their guns by their side. The reason of this different effect, is a melancholy proof of stupidity of the natural heart. Because the hour of death is uncertain, the thoughts of it are put far off; and the deceitful heart imagines, that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant. Mankind have express warning from God himself, that they are liable, every moment, to receive death at his hands; but they conduct as though they believed it not. Rather than have their carnal ease and sensual pleasures disturbed, they will risk consequences; and never can they be persuaded by men, or reason, or conscience, without the operations of the Spirit of God, to open their eyes to consideration, until the flashes of hell open them to eternal despair. Nothing but the convincing and convicting influences of the Spirit of God, will make mankind view death as real and certain, and the consequences infinitely important. And then, unless God give them grace, their impressions will soon wear off, and they become more stupid than ever. Like iron, the oftener it is heated in the fire, the harder it grows; so, the more the human heart is striven with by the Holy Spirit, without its being converted, the more insensible and hardened it becomes. It is, I believe, a

time of as great stupidity about religion, in this town, as I have known for forty years ; and there is, probably, as little practical religion. "Iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxen cold." Of many, did I say ? I might, almost, say of all. I can scarcely name the person who appears to retain that degree of animation in religion, they did eighteen months ago. The main topic of conversation is, how to get property, and who will show us any earthly good ? The most of conversation, when neighbours meet, is "empty as the whistling wind." There never was a time when the observation of the Psalmist was more applicable to people here, than at this day.

" Lord, if thou dost not soon appear,
Virtue and truth will fly away ;
A faithful man among us here,
Will scarce be found, if thou delay.
The whole discourse, when neighbours meet,
Is fill'd with trifles light and vain ;
Their lips are flattery and deceit,
And their proud language is profane."

Even the precious few who retain their love of religion, appear as if they strove to hide their virtues and graces, lest they should incur, among worldlings, the appellation of enthusiasts. I fear the displeasure of God is less dreaded than the charge of superstition, bigotry, or some other hard name, that the wicked world are prone to charge upon God's children, to keep themselves in countenance. But the time is coming, and will soon arrive, when, (unless timely repentance prevent,) the wicked

will be in utter dismay and confusion. Who will appear with the greatest confidence at the bar of God,—he who can now ridicule and despise, and spurn at religious people, and set at nought the word and law of God,—or he who now trembles at his word, and walks humbly before him? It is futile for any to think of enjoying heaven, if they do not love and enjoy religion here. Heaven must be begun on earth. Death does not change the disposition of any soul. He that at that period is found filthy, will be filthy still; and he that is found righteous, will be righteous still. The fact is, that when the soul is separated from the body, it is perfected in that principle, whether sin or holiness, which actuated it before. The principle of holiness implanted in the soul of a believer, is but in embryo, while we are in a state of mortality; and though constantly growing, yet will never arrive to any thing like perfection, while the soul is imprisoned in this clayey tabernacle. The Christian who would wish to have sensible growth in grace, must inure himself to the utmost diligence in the Christian warfare. The Apostle Paul often compares it to the military exercises of soldiers, in an enemy's land. You may see a description of the Christian armour, in Ephesians vi. from the 10th to the 18th verses, with which a Christian must be clad, in order to withstand his foes without, and foes within. It is a very unfavourable omen in a professor, to be contented with present supposed attain-

ments in holiness. It gives occasion for fear that he has never, as yet, known what it is to have any true gracious exercises. Not so the great Apostle, just referred to. See what his resolution was, in Philippians iii. 12—14. He was very far from thinking that he had grace enough, while it was but just sufficient to carry him to heaven. The professor whose motive extends no further than escaping hell, and barely getting to heaven, has just reason to fear that his hopes are falsely founded, and that he is yet “in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.”

My time and paper both fail; and I must conclude, by informing you that we, and all family connexions this way, are in usual health. I have not forgot my engagement to visit Claremont this season; and nothing but sickness in myself or family, shall prevent the fulfilment of it. And when I come, hope I shall be able to answer your former request.

From your affectionate father,

SETH COLEMAN.



TO HIS SON, E——B——, AT CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

Amherst, June 3, 1807.

MY DEAR BEREAVED CHILD,

I HAVE this day received your melancholy letter, by the hand of Mr. C——, the fourth since the death of your ever to be remembered consort. I do not think you exaggerate, when you say, she was one of the brightest orna-

ments of her sex. I ever considered her possessed of a mind richly endowed with natural and moral excellence. And I think it appears, by epistolary and verbal information, that her singular virtues shone, if possible, more conspicuously in her death, than in her life. She was of that reserved, retiring disposition, that the excellence of her character was but partially known, except to her most intimate friends. While you mourn the loss of such a worthy companion, you must not fail to yield the tribute of gratitude you owe to God, for giving you an acquaintance and union with her; and for continuing her to you, as long as he hath done. He might have taken her from you, before you had an opportunity of witnessing so much of her excellence, or in a manner that would have deprived you of that plenary evidence of her faith and resignation. This is no small source of consolation and happiness. Since you find that she could not be spared for your enjoyment any longer, it is an unspeakable satisfaction to reflect upon the vast enlargement of happiness which she has acquired by her removal. You will consider, that, like all temporal mercies, she was but a lent blessing; and, in giving her to you, God did not relinquish his prerogative over her, and his right to take her to himself, whenever he saw best. God giveth no account of any of his matters to his creatures. It is sufficient for us to know, that perfect rectitude runs through all the divine government; and it is

our indispensable duty, as Christians, to submit to the intimations of God's will, in all things. I am not insensible, that it is impossible for us to do it, of ourselves; but we have a promise from God, that if we seek aright, his grace shall be sufficient for us. Paul said, he could do all things, through Christ strengthening him. You know where to go, for help. It is our happy privilege, that, in all times of adversity and trial, we have a God to go to, who is always more ready and willing to relieve his children, than earthly parents are their natural offspring. He hath told us, that he is nigh unto all them who call upon him in truth and sincerity. I am not insensible, my dear child, that your afflictions are attended with many aggravating circumstances; and my heart often bleeds for you, when I meditate on your situation. But it is in vain for you to look to an earthly parent for relief. Although it is very desirable to have our friends around us in times of trouble, yet vain is the help of man. If I were with you, I could by no means afford you the consolation necessary. I could only pray for you, and direct you to that Source, which, you already know, is the only one to which you must look. You are sure that my prayers are continually ascending for you, and that, if such an unworthy creature as I am, can have influence at the throne of almighty grace, you will receive all the help I could afford, if I were there. Not only yourself, but all my children, have been particularly

remembered by me twice a day, in secret, for a number of years; and, I am determined, ever shall be, while God gives me breath to pray.

I hope you will let me hear from you frequently, and will inform me of the state of your health, and your calculations for the future. I feel disposed to add many things, but time will not permit. I must, however, again enjoin it upon you, to use your utmost endeavours, the grace of God assisting, not to let your afflictions get the supremacy of your better judgment, to the injury of your health and usefulness. Mr. C—— is waiting, and I must bid you adieu for the present; but with an assurance that I will write often.

From your most affectionate father,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS SON B—— B ——, AT CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

Amherst, June 10, 1807.

IT will doubtless be unexpected to you, my dear child, to hear from me in this way, as your expectation will be from Mr. C——. He was here at the time you anticipated; but so much of our time was spent in conversation, I had but little to spend in writing: so I send this as a supplement.

My great anxiety for you, in this day of adversity, will not allow me to be long silent: and being confident that it affords you consolation and pleasure to hear often from your old

Father, I have no fear of causing unpleasant interruption. The testimony of your filial affection has been too abundant to leave room for any fears of that kind. Therefore, while Providence continues us at a distance that renders personal interviews impracticable, I shall indulge myself in writing often.

I feel extremely anxious about your health, and fear you will forget the duty you owe to yourself, and be inattentive to self-preservation. I gave you a recipe, (in a letter which you probably have received,) of the aromatic bitter, as you requested me. In addition to the things, you say, you are using, I would recommend the free use of brandy and milk, as I may have mentioned before. You must pay particular attention to exercise. Many persons in your situation, very unwisely, closet themselves up, and give vent to their passions, until they injure their constitutions, if not endanger their lives. This is irreligious. It is our duty to submit with cheerfulness to the hand of God; and not only in word, but practically, say, "Thy will be done." Others, again, will neglect business, as if they thought they had no more to do with the things of this world: and some have gone so far as to say, they are as willing to die as to live; and even choose to die. This looks like petulence; and is diametrically opposite to the meek, humble, submissive disposition of a Christian. The fact is, that affliction is so far from excusing us from the duties of life, that it does, or ought

to prompt to more diligence in every branch of duty, as well as more fervour of spirit in the service of God : and we ought also to be led to more circumspection of motive in business ; to pursue our calling with a more single eye to the glory of God ; and endeavour more faithfully to answer the requisition of our blessed Lord, “ Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” As the correction of earthly parents should lead their children to more strict obedience ; so, that of our heavenly Parent should certainly have the same salutary tendency. It is, I believe, a rare attainment, even among Christians, to be able to pursue their secular affairs, more with an eye to God’s glory, than their own emolument. But it is, however, a required duty, and an attainable duty ; for nothing is required but what is attainable. And all, who would live godly in this evil world, should aim at the performance of it. *That* Christian, who increases in humility and lowliness of mind, is growing in grace, whether he feel more sensible love to God, or not. For trust and dependence upon God will increase, in proportion as humility increases, whether he enjoy little or much of the divine presence. The enjoyment of the light of God’s countenance is not necessarily connected with strong faith. It is always the duty of a Christian to believe, that a hidden God is a merciful God still. He that may, with propriety, be said to live by faith, can trust Providence in the dark-

est seasons, when the eye of reason can see no way of escape. Thus Abraham proceeded to offer up his son, in whom the promise was made; and his faith was rewarded by an interposition for the safety of his son. It may be objected, that we are not in these days to expect miracles. But faith will enable us to believe, that God never wants for ways and means to relieve his creatures, when he sees it best to afford them aid. The wicked boast of trusting Providence for support, when their coffers are full of money, and their granaries, of bread: but their feelings in adversity might convince them that they deceive themselves, and that they in fact trusted only to their own ability to procure these things. Real faith and trust in God is not confined to seasons of prosperity.

I hope, my son, that your present experience attests the truth of this observation. I hope you are enjoying that quietness and peace, which entire submission alone can give. I hope your language has been, "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause; which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number."—If you have committed your cause unto God, with right exercises of heart, he will, most assuredly, enable you hereafter to say, with the pious Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. I know, O Lord, that

thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

It is an incalculable support to a Christian, that he is in the hands of a pure and holy God, whose ways are all directed by infinite wisdom and perfect rectitude, and to know that "he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; but, as need be, for their good." God often lays his chastening rod upon his children, in the tenderest mercy; that by the sanctification of affliction, they may experience the greater mercies. May this be the happy issue of your trials. * * * *

You will seldom hear from this quarter, without having your heart pained with the melancholy tidings, that some of your friends or acquaintance are no more. Your feelings will be forcibly touched, when I tell you that Mrs. B——, the wife of Wm. B——, is one of the number that have lately gone. She was called off the stage in a most surprising manner. She was confined, on Monday before last, with a fine, promising son; after which, she appeared uninterruptedly to gain till Saturday evening, when she took tea with the family in good spirits, and apparent good health. After tea, she wished the family to leave the room, expressing a desire to be alone. They had just entered the other room, when they heard her call out; and running in, they found her lying on the floor: they laid her on a bed, and she revived so as to speak a few words. She told them, she thought she was dying. They

attempted to dissuade her from the idea ; but she repeated it, and exclaimed, " Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commit my spirit ! "—and then expired immediately. We were obliged to inter the corpse the next day, by reason of putrefaction. Thus were her flattering prospects cut off in a moment ! How great the contrast ! In the full expectation of life and health ; and, in less than half an hour, in the world of spirits ! Oh, how forcibly are we taught the uncertainty of all sublunary things ! Mr. B— is, almost in an instant, deprived of an agreeable companion ; and eight young children, of a tender and affectionate mother.—How loud does it speak to us, " Be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh ! "

We have, this spring, a mortal putrid disease prevalent among children and young ones, similar to that of which Mr. U—, of North-Hampton, died. Few live twenty-four hours after being taken with it. Some in neighbouring towns, I hear, have died in nine or ten hours.

All family friends this way, and, for aught I know, at a distance, are well. Your mother joins in most affectionate regards to you ; and we wish to be remembered to your particular friends, though to us unknown.

Your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS SON E—— B——, AT CANANDAIGUA.

Amherst, July 31, 1807.

MY DEAR CHILD,

PARTLY in compliance with your request that I should write often, and partly through my paternal solicitude for you, in your lonely situation, I again resume the pen. Oh that the blessing of Heaven might enable me to pour some balm of consolation into the wounds of your bosom, which seem to be still bleeding! I pray God to heal them! You need much of the assistance of his Spirit to regulate your conduct, that you may not dishonour the religion of Jesus. Of all the graces of the Spirit, those of meekness and contentment under the frowns of Providence, shine with the greatest lustre. Happy is it for all the afflicted, who can say, with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "I have learnt, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." He that can truly, and from motives of filial affection to God, acquiesce in the afflictive dispensations of Providence, may enjoy life, in any situation. The conduct of King David at the death of his child, was admirable, and worthy the imitation of every Christian. Although the immediate change in his conduct, after the death of the child, was mysterious to his domestics, yet the experienced Christian understands it well. His observation, of going to the child, doubtless referred to his meeting him in heav-

en; for it is generally believed by divines, that he had an assurance, that his prayers for the salvation of his soul were answered. It is absurd to suppose that he spoke of descending into the grave to the child; as that could be no source of consolation to him: therefore the former supposition must follow. And can you not, my child, avail yourself of the like consolation, respecting your departed friend? You say, you are in the full belief that she has gone to rest, and commenced an eternity of blessedness. And will not this buoy up your spirits, and support you under the heavy load, which, you say, presses you down to the earth? If she is in heaven, and you are not deceived in your hope of an interest in Jesus, you will soon be with her, and enjoy her company in a much higher degree, than you could do in this state of frailty and imperfection. I am constrained to tell you, my son, that from the spirit of your own writing, it appears to me, you indulge an inordinate degree of grief. Is it not a crime to mourn immoderately for the death of godly friends? Shall we mourn for their preferment in a heaven of joy? Why should we shed so many tears for those who are perfectly happy, and have all tears wiped from their eyes? Why should we be swallowed up, as it were, with grief for those who are swallowed up with joy? They are gone to their kingdom: they are not lost, but gone a little before; not perished, but translated: they are removed to

their infinite advantage ; as if one should be removed from a smoky cottage to a palace. Shall Elisha weep immoderately, because Elijah is carried in a fiery chariot to heaven ? I know not why excessive grief may not be as provoking to God, as a contempt of his chastening rod. Immoderate grief bears the complexion of discontent, and unwillingness to submit to the government of God ; and therefore this, in a Christian, brings a slur upon Christianity. Though the removal of her, who was so dear to you, is in itself one of the greatest of trials ; yet, God's voice to you, is, Be still, and know that I am God ! The Prophet Amos saith, " Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it ? " It is the evil of affliction, undoubtedly, to which he has reference. God is, in a sense, the cause of our afflictions, though they are sent upon us for our sins. Alas ! how much more prone are we to complain of our outward afflictions, than we are of our inbred sins, which ought to be felt to be the greatest affliction ; and are, indeed, the procuring cause of all others ! Our sins are the means of bringing upon us all the evils we sustain in this life, and those which, without true repentance, we must sustain for ever. The best advice I can give you, my son, is to cultivate a spirit of submission and contentment. Remember the command of God is, " Be still, and know that I am God." And surely the reason presents a sufficient motive, which is, God's promise,

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” He hath bid us believe, and be content; and is not his word a sufficient warrant? You ought often to consider, who it is that has placed you in this condition. It is not chance, or fortune; but the all-wise God, by his righteous providence, has been pleased to visit you thus. Holy David could say, “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.” How much sweet peace and comfort would this language afford you, if you could adopt it as your own! The consideration that infinite Wisdom appoints all the circumstances of our lives, ought to fill us with contentment and satisfaction. If we were left to direct events for ourselves, we should soon effect our own ruin. Rachel said, “Give me children, or I die;” and her request was granted; but the very enjoyment of her wishes effected, instead of preventing her death. Another reason for contentment is, the infinite fulness there is in Christ; which we may have as a substitute for the loss of earthly good: and what reason can we have to complain of this loss, if it may be made up in heavenly blessings? Stretch your ideas to their utmost bounds, and they cannot comprehend the inexhaustible treasures of the religion of Jesus Christ. And when possessions of such inexpressible worth, may be yours, by faith and prayer, shall you give yourself up to grief for earthly afflictions? Do you not pray, “Thy will be done?” And will you be so inconsist-

ent, as to grieve excessively, when your prayer is answered, and you see the will of the Lord *is* done? The spirit of that prayer is not, "Thy will be done," if it should not interfere with my earthly enjoyments, calculations, and hopes—"Thy will be done," as far as is agreeable to my desires and schemes of earthly happiness. This appears ridiculous indeed, when put in words; but how is the guilt lessened by expressing it in action merely? True, the dispensations of Providence may appear dark to us, short-sighted mortals. Clouds and darkness are often round about the Almighty; but it is equally true, that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. It is as vain as presumptuous, for us to try to penetrate the mysteries of Providence; and as wicked, to despond because we cannot. Good old Jacob said, "All these things are against me;" when, as it proved, by those very things, God was bringing about great good to him and his family.

Afflictions are often very advantageous to the Christian: they are disciplinary, teaching him many important lessons concerning the statutes of God, and his own duty of subjection and humility. Here he learns dependence, that lesson so hard to be learnt. The hard cords of affliction are much more powerful to draw us to God, than the silken cords of prosperity. Jonah was asleep in the ship, while it was under pleasant sail; but awake, and at prayer, in the whale's belly. The

Prophet Isaiah said of the children of Israel, "Lord, in trouble they have visited thee : they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them." Before, they would *say* a prayer;—now, they *pour out* a prayer.

Afflictions are often sent for a touch-stone of sincerity, to try the genuineness of our faith. The best faith, like the stars, shines brightest in the darkest night. It is best our graces should be brought to a trial; best for our own comfort, ultimately; and best for the honour of the Gospel. How dull is the fire, when hid in the embers! and how dull is a Christian, when his graces are not in exercise? A sick man is living, but not lively. Afflictions have a natural tendency to quicken and excite gracious affections, to uncover the fire, and to revive the spiritually sick. God loves to see the graces of his children in exercise; to see them patient, submissive, and contented. And how absurd for them to resist those corrections, which are applied for their good! The Apostle saith, "All things shall work together for good, to them that love God."—Contentment is a noble grace. Patience only denotes submission: but contentment denotes cheerfulness, and entire acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence.

Could your departed friend look down and see your flowing tears, and be permitted to speak to you, what do you think she would say? Methinks she would accost you in the language of our blessed Lord to the weeping

women, who were following him to the place of execution ;—methinks she would say, “ Weep not for me, but for yourself,” and the wicked world in which you live. The will of the Lord is done, respecting me : therefore strive to be content, and watch and pray that you may make a wise improvement of the providence ; and strive to follow those, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. And, my son, will you not obey the directions which reason tells you she would give ? Will you not cheerfully submit to the government of the Best of Beings, who will order all things for your best good ?

Hoping that you will experience the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and enjoy the sweets of Christian resignation, and have the precious light of God’s countenance ; I subscribe myself,

Your affectionate and anxious Father,
S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS GRAND-CHILDREN.

Amherst, February 18, 1808.

DEAR YOUTH,

THINK it not strange, that your old, silver-headed grand-parent should take it upon him, to divert your youthful minds from your pleasurable pursuits, for a short space ; nor suffer your minds to indulge the idea, that he wishes to abridge you of any happiness that

is worth the pursuit of an immortal mind. My only object is, if possible, (by the help of divine grace,) so to regulate your moral views, as to insure you, not only all consistent earthly good, but celestial and eternal happiness, in the world to come.

Happiness is the first object of every rational creature's pursuit. It appears even in the infant at the breast : after this, he seeks it in playful toys ; then, in sportive plays ; then, in social pastimes ; then, as he advances to manhood, he seeks it in what the world calls more manly employments. Some seek it in the honours of gaudy show, some in riches, some in pleasure. The cry of most is, "Who will show us any earthly good?" while the cry of a precious few is, "Lord, lift thou up on us the light of thy countenance!" Oh, that by the blessing of Heaven, I might succeed in influencing your young and tender minds, to adopt this prayer of the Psalmist, and make it your own ! Oh, my tender offspring, my heart aches for you, while my hand writes to you ! knowing you to be insensible of the ensnaring and deceitful nature of the world, into which you are born. Little do you know, how many, and how powerful are the enemies you will have to encounter, from the world, from the adversary of souls, and from your own deceitful, wicked hearts.

Your great errand into this world, my children, is, to prepare for heaven, and to augment God's declarative glory among intelli-

gent beings. You have all been told the great and interesting truth, that heaven or hell is to be the final and eternal destination of mankind, according to their choice of good or evil in this world.

You are, most of you, old enough to have some faint idea of these future states of happiness and misery. You have often been told, that the godly, after death, will go to heaven, to be happy with God, and Christ, and the holy angels; while those who live wicked, impenitent lives, in this state of probation, will, after death, be turned down to hell, to be tormented with devils and damned spirits for ever and ever. Now, in order to obtain heaven, and to escape the insupportable pains of hell, you must be new born in spirit; the habits of sin must be broken off, and holiness of heart and life not only manifested, but sincerely possessed. All this, and much more, (I presume,) has been inculcated upon you, by your parents.

But, my dear children, have you been suitably impressed with these solemn things? Multitudes, now in hell, were told all this, from childhood to old age, and they professed to believe the necessity of being renewed by the Spirit of God; and expected they should be in some more convenient opportunity before they left the world; but alas! this idle expectation was never realized; they never found this convenient opportunity, which they flattered themselves with. Be not deceived,

God is not mocked with vain pretences. We cannot deceive that Almighty Being who perfectly knows the secrets of all hearts. The fact is just this, that those persons do but deceive themselves, who put off for a more convenient season. He who has not come to a firm resolution to reform his life from the present moment, and repent and turn to God with new and persevering assiduity, has not, in reality, determined ever to do it. It is only a stratagem of Satan, to keep unguarded souls at ease in sin. He well knows, that, as long as he can keep them trusting in his refuges of lies, they are his prisoners. It is a game at which he has long been playing: and perhaps he has no artifice more successful than flattering people with the idea that they shall repent at some future time. The tempter, and your vain associates, will suggest, that it is folly to mind religion in youth; that it will necessitate you to forsake all the pleasurable pursuits of this life; that religion is a melancholy thing; that if necessary, there will be time enough to think about it, after being settled in the world; you have a long time yet to live; and it is time to think about religion, when you are too old to enjoy any thing else. I pray you, my friends, to consider, who it is that makes these suggestions, and promises; who it is that suggests the idea of religion's being unpleasant, and melancholy; and promises you a long life: remember it is the devil, the father of lies. Pray remember, that your

breath and life are in God's hands ; that you can boast of no time but the present ; that but a small proportion of mankind live to be old ; and should you be among that small number, there is no probability that you would be any more inclined to be religious, than you are now ; for nothing is more rare, than for old sinners to be reclaimed. It is a rare thing, indeed, to find one of any age, of shining graces, that had not the seeds of grace sown in his heart when he was young. Should you live to old age, be assured that religion is the best possible promoter of happiness, in any stage of life. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is utterly false, that religion checks enjoyment : it greatly enhances it. It is incompatible with no pleasures that are rational, innocent, and safe. It does indeed forbid guilty, ruinous pleasures ; and from such, certainly it is our happiness to refrain : and if there were no future state of existence, religion would be the highest source of happiness.

I have heard many say, after they come to taste the sweets of true religion, that they have more satisfaction and real enjoyment, even in one hour, than they had ever experienced in all their life before. It is true, that we see sometimes the godly man dejected, and melancholy ; and it is equally true, that it is not religion that makes him so, but the want of it. He is like a person, who, having tasted the

delicious sweetness of honey, hankers after it, and is uneasy because he cannot obtain it. The godly man, having enjoyed some glimmerings of the light of God's countenance, mourns and laments, that he cannot enjoy more of it; or, in other words, he mourns for the corrupt remains of sin within him, which hides the light of God's gracious countenance from him.

I pray you, also, to consider, that there is not the least intimation of encouragement, in God's word, to delaying sinners. All the promises are connected with the present moment; and all expectations of God with sinners are, to turn now. Although God hath promised forgiveness to him that repenteth, he hath no where promised repentance to him that sinneth.

Consider, my children, that if God should suffer you to live to old age, in your sins and provocations, whether you can have the effrontry to go to him for forgiveness and mercy, after giving your best days to Satan, his inveterate enemy? Will not the consideration of having wilfully, against all his admonitions and warnings, rejected his offers of grace, and spent your youth, and the best of your days, in the service of sin, and in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, overwhelm you, and "drink up your spirits?" Can you be so stupid, and so lost to all sense of moral obligation, as to pursue such a daring course as this? Oh, what awful remorse will it occasion! Nothing is

more common, than for old sinners to flatter themselves that they have become better men, when age and obtuseness check their ardour for sinful gratification. Worn out in the service of Satan, their natural power of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, is diminished: hence, they conclude that they are less inclined to sin, and so flatter themselves, that they are prepared for death. Thus, their impious rejection of God, ends in fatal delusion. What less can old sinners expect at the hands of God, than the execution of the awful denunciation in the 1st of Proverbs, from the 24th to the 31st verses, inclusive? which I pray you to read with attention. Think not, as most do, that a holy God is all mercy, to the exclusion of justice; but remember, that the attribute of justice is as dear to him, as that of mercy; and he will as assuredly glorify it upon the impenitent, as that of mercy on the penitent.

I cannot dismiss this epistle, without giving you my paternal injunction, to attend, without the least delay, to the things that concern your everlasting peace. The Holy Ghost saith, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts." Return now unto God, and make your peace with him; repent of sin in deep contrition, and apply to the blood of a crucified Saviour, for the purification and sanctification of your souls. You must attend to these things from other considerations than mere personal safety. You

must be convinced that you are guilty sinners ; and that the guilt of sin is enormous ; and that you justly deserve banishment for ever, from the presence of that glorious King, against whom it is committed. You must feel the wretchedness of alienation from God, and be more distressed for your guilt, and for the loss of his Saviour, than for your safety. You must turn to this good and glorious Being, with full purpose of heart, to serve and know him.

When you have these exercises, my dear children, you will be enabled to declare, what is true happiness. Then you will be able to form some estimate of the unsatisfying, low, insignificant pleasures of time and sense ; and the noble, elevating, substantial enjoyments of the religion of Jesus.

And what shall I say more ? for my time and paper fails me. I must therefore leave you in the hands of that holy and righteous God, before whose awful bar, both you and I shall soon stand ; either on the right hand, or on the left, to receive the decisive sentence of absolution or condemnation, which will consign us to our unchangeable residence in heaven or hell ; in happiness or misery for ever and ever. That you all may be prepared to meet your Judge in peace, is the daily (and I trust the sincere) prayer of your affectionate grand-parent.

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS SON W——, MIDDLEFIELD.

Amherst, February 20, 1808.

DEAR CHILD,

IT is long since I have had any direct information from you, or learnt any thing of your family situation; whether you are in prosperity or adversity, health or sickness.

It is rather singular, that your location should be such, that although the distance is short, I should hear from all my other children, even the one who is three hundred miles from me, many times, where I hear from you once. We have, however, this advantage; if either of our families are in distress, we can more readily see each other, and lend our friendly aid.

I have not a doubt in my mind, but that God has some infinitely wise end to answer, in ordering the circumstances of my children, so that none of them, consistently with their interest, can live with me, and be the supporters of my tottering years. He sits at the helm of the universe, and regulates every thing in the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace. Nothing is too minute to escape his notice, or too trifling to share his particular direction. Not even a hair of our head falls to the ground, without him. In the wisdom and rectitude of his government, I have a firm and unshaken confidence, and rejoice that he will so order all things, as ultimately to promote his own glory, and the

greatest individual good of all those, who sincerely put their trust in him. Under these impressions, I trust, it is my constant endeavour to submit cheerfully to all the dispensations of Providence, however crossing they may be to my fleshly inclinations : and to follow where my Lord and Master leads, when I can trace his leadings, however rugged and thorny the way ; hoping, that, through his unmerited goodness and mercy, it will eventually conduct to the delightful mansions of the blessed.

You will seldom hear from your native place, without hearing of the death of some of your old acquaintance : so constantly is the work of death progressing, that souls are continually departing from among us.

Though it is generally very healthy in this town, yet numbers have paid the debt to divine justice, since I last saw you ; and some have died very suddenly. * * *

The dispensations of Providence, in the multiplicity of sudden deaths, in this town, are very singular. It is devoutly to be wished, that an attention to spiritual and divine things, may be excited by their means. But alas ! the human heart is proof against every thing, short of the immediate influences of the Spirit of God. These, in the day of his power, they cannot resist : for though Moses and the Prophets, and all the New-Testament writers, speak in vain ; yet, when the energetic influences of the Holy Spirit set home their truths

to the heart, they are made willing, and lay down the weapons of their rebellion.

I am sensible, that you will be anxious to know the state of your old Father's health this winter. The most I can say, is, that I am not yet reduced so low as I was last winter. I am able, for the most of the time, to be about; but find, annually, that the infirmities of old age are increasing upon me, and loudly admonishing me to be in habitual and actual readiness for the solemn summons of death. How soon you will hear, that this summons has called away him, who, under God, was the supporter of your tender years, he only knows. But the time when, or the means by which it shall be effected, is of small consequence indeed, in comparison with the important question, whether I am prepared for the solemn event. This question, alas! occupies the attention of but few, comparatively speaking; or at least, so as to have it influence their conduct. Most are putting off the thoughts of death for a more convenient time, because they feel a reluctance at present to attend to the solemn subject. They vainly flatter themselves, that at some future period, the subject will be more welcome and familiar, and an attention to it easier, than at present; but a moment's reflection would teach them, that directly the reverse will be the case. God's complaint of his chosen people, is certainly as applicable to the present generation, as to them. "Israel doth not know;

my people doth not consider." The want of timely consideration, hath sent millions down to hell; and doubtless will many millions more. God tells us by the prophet, "Madness is in the heart of man while he lives; and after that, he goeth to the dead." "Oh, that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

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S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS SON W——, MIDDLEFIELD.

Amherst, July 4, 1808.

MY DEAR CHILD,

ALTHOUGH that all-wise Providence, that fixes the bounds of every one's habitation, has been pleased so to locate most of my children, that I can enjoy but few personal interviews with them; yet I esteem it a rich privilege, that we can have epistolary intercourse, and thereby sympathize with each other, in prosperity or adversity; and also strengthen that mutual affection and cordiality, which distance and absence may in some instances weaken. The absence of my children, however, has no effect to diminish my attachments, but rather proves a stimulus to me, to embrace every opportunity of letting something drop from my pen, that by the blessing of God, may be of some little service to them, in the midst of "a crooked and perverse generation." The nearer I approach

the completion of those glorious hopes, which Christianity gives, the more ardent are my desires of promoting the eternal welfare of those most dear to me. My growing infirmities teach me, that my dissolution is approaching; when I must be unclothed, and put off this tabernacle of clay: but, if I am only fitted to be "clothed upon, with the robe of Christ's righteousness," it will be of little consequence to me, when the time comes.

It is incumbent upon all, whether old or young, who have named the name of Christ, to endeavour to "let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven." Thus doing, they will convince the unthinking world around them, that religion yields its own reward, in the practice of it; that it is not a vain thing to serve the Lord.

I know my dear children will not think strange of their old father's expressing so much concern for them. If you, for a moment, bring to mind your own, and other parent's feelings, you will by no means think my concern officious. I feel deeply interested in your present, but especially, in your future happiness.

It is but a short time since, my family was in a similar state with yours; a brood of little tender ones around me, looking up for parental aid; so that it is easy for me to realize all your anxious cares and troubles. And

knowing, from experience, how prone we are to let these worldly avocations steal away our hearts from God and duty, and engross our minds to the neglect of both ; I am constrained, renewedly, to lay my parental injunction upon you, to set a double guard upon your heart, to prevent an inordinate anxiety about worldly interest, and a guilty decline in the service of God. Be very careful, not to lose a sense of your entire dependence on the unseen hand of Providence, for a blessing on your wordly concerns ; and no less to enable you to growth in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not having lived so long as I have, you have not been so experimentally taught the danger of backsliding ; and I pray that you may never feel the bitter remorse, which it occasions. It is one of the most difficult attainments of the Christian, to be as much concerned with the world, as duty requires ; and yet, enabled to overcome its temptations. An industrious attention to secular concerns, is a positive duty. But it is difficult indeed, and needs much of the assistance of God's Spirit, to enable us to live above the world, while we live in it ; and so to use it, as not to abuse it ; or have our hearts captivated with its flattering charms, or inordinately drawn out after its pleasurable enjoyments. The God we profess to serve, is a jealous God ; he will not suffer any rival in the hearts of his children. If we ungratefully suffer any thing of an earthly nature, to

occupy that room in our affections, which our rightful Sovereign claims as his due, he will remove the object from us; or, in some other way, chastise us for our idolatry. This he does in mercy, as well as judgment; for when an idol is enthroned in our hearts, we are made captives by it, and need the merciful interpositions of our abused God, to redeem us from the dangerous bondage. If we would live near to God, have our hearts devoted to his service, and enjoy his sensible presence, we must constantly keep a lively remembrance of him in our minds. Wherever we are, or whatever we are about, an abiding sense of his presence, must rest upon us. "We must fear before him all the day, nor dare to sin." He must be the last in our thoughts when we retire to rest, and the first when we arise in the morning. The direction of our blessed Lord is, to pray always; that is, to be always in a proper frame of mind, to address the throne of Almighty grace: then we shall be frequent in ejaculatory supplications, which some divines have thought, are more effectual, than set forms of prayer.

My time fails me, and must prevent my pursuing the pleasing theme.

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Yours in much affection,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER MRS. S——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, September 29, 1800.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM so often scribbling to you and the Doctor, that I fear I shall weary your patience; but if you reflect for a moment how near children are to parents, you will not wonder at it, but readily excuse me. You, already, have some faint idea of the tenderness of this connexion; but if you, and your dear babe live, you will find that your affection will increase, in proportion to its increase in years. Nothing so much interests a parent's heart, as the well being and happiness of his children.

There will be a last time of my writing to you; when, or how soon, God only knows. "The young *may* die; the old *must* die." Of this truth, I trust, you are not unmindful: however, as we are naturally attached to the things of time and sense, and prone to have our minds taken up with the allurements of a gaudy and enticing world; to forget, or to put far away, the evil day; thinking that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant, and that we have yet many days to live in the world; we need to be constantly reminded of that, which we already know perfectly well.

I am as well now, (for aught I know,) as before my last severe sickness. But I view that as a monitor of my approaching day of death. Old people are like old tattered buildings, that

are essentially weakened by every severe gust of wind ; and more and more, until they fall. If we seemingly recover from sickness, yet every shock leaves us one or more degrees weaker, and less able to meet the succeeding one ; and by and bye, the old tottering fabric crumbles down, and moulders back to its mother earth.

You have now just set out on the busy scenes, and perplexing cares of life ; and probably, like the bulk of mankind, are fondly flattering yourself with future prospects of more comfortable days. I wish, indeed, that you might not be disappointed ; but few, very few, ever find those halcyon days which they so fondly expect. It would be impossible for me, in this place, to recount the many ways in which we are liable to be disappointed. Suffice it to say, the greatest satisfaction any one ever takes in creature objects, or created enjoyments, is in anticipation. There are such a variety of ways for our hopes and prospects to be frustrated, that the only way to make life comfortable, or even tolerable, is, to have our views and prospects centre beyond, and above the frowns and flatteries of a treacherous and deceitful world. We should never expect durable happiness from created sources ; but take the lot and portion Providence assigns us, with resignation and contentment ; firmly believing, “ that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his pur-

pose :” and in faithfully and industriously discharging our personal and relative duties, (as far as we know them ;) having a single eye to the glory of God ; and in this way trust Providence for a supply of all needed good, even in the darkest hours. Light often arises out of apparent darkness, and brightness out of obscurity. As we know not either love or hatred, by the things that we suffer in this life ; so we cannot judge of the future designs of Providence, from present appearances. This is usually ordered, to prove our faith in the divine government. Good old Jacob said, “ All these things are against me,” while, in fact, those very things were working for his good. Those are but miserable objects, (even in this life,) who place all their happiness in creature comforts. If they are in ever so affluent circumstances, provided they cannot with satisfaction retire by themselves, and calmly reflect upon a future state of rewards and punishments, they are far from being happy. Oh ! how little do they know of solid, permanent happiness, who have not had their eyes opened to see the guilt of sin, and their ruined condition in consequence of it ; and have not a saving trust in the meritorious righteousness of Christ, for pardon and acceptance at the great and trying day ! It is an easy thing to be a nominal Christian, and no difficult matter to deceive ourselves ; but we cannot deceive our Judge. It is one thing, to get a hope, by which we can (for a while in health,) live tol-

erably easy; but quite another thing, to get that well grounded assurance, which will raise us above the fears of death, and an appearance at the bar of Jehovah. None, indeed, ought to stop short of this assurance; but there is so much indolence, and such want of perseverance in the Christian warfare, that few ever attain it. We are directed to make our calling and election sure: and this can be done only by "giving all diligence, in adding to faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." All unite, in considering the full assurance of hope, very desirable; but few seem to realize that it is attainable by common Christians. They forget that it is a commanded duty; and seem to think, it was only for an Apostle to say, "Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." "I know whom I have believed." &c. Well might they be addressed upon the subject, "Oh ye of little faith!" when they are so unbelieving and indolent, in the very face of such full and repeated promises of the Gospel. Oh, precious covenant of grace well ordered in all things and sure! But I must stop. Be admonished, from an affectionate parent, to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Je-

sus, until you obtain an assured title to the heavenly inheritance.

Your mother has not yet recovered from the terrible fall, of which I wrote you; but is more comfortable. She joins me in the kindest regards to you, and all the family.

I am anxious to see you both, and the dear little one. I hope the Doctor and you will come and see us in the winter. I think you ought to come, once a year at least, and see your father while he yet lives. Do write me when your uncle returns.

Your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, February 6, 1803.

DEAR CHILD,

YOU are so seldom at home, and when there, your stay is so short, and my avocations so many, that I have little or no time for serious conversation with you; therefore, must have recourse to writing: and I trust you will bear with my importunity upon the subject of religion; convinced, as I trust you are, of its infinite importance. I feel that I should lose no time, in pressing its importance upon your mind. I am old, and must die soon; you are young, but may die sooner. "There is no discharge in that war." Vivacity of youth, strength of constitution, or any thing

of which we can boast, will yield us no security against the king of terrors. The living know, or ought to know, that they must die, and it may be very soon; but we look in vain for any proper effect of this knowledge, upon the conduct of most people. The generality conduct as though they believed they should live here for ever.

You have probably heard of the death of poor Z——.* Yes, since I last wrote to you, one of the family have had their destination fixed for a long, long eternity. You will learn the particulars of his death, from your sister's letter.

Oh, my dear child, are you prepared for the solemn event of death? I fear that you are of that unwise class of people, who are waiting for a more convenient season; flattering themselves, that, at some future period, they shall have fewer avocations to hinder, or more inclination to attend to the one thing needful; neither of which are ever realized. The longer any one lives in the neglect of God and duty, the less inclination he feels to attend to the things of religion. And I would appeal to your own conscience, whether your anxiety of mind upon the subject of religion increases, with the increase of your years? If you live, your cares will, undoubtedly, greatly multiply; your heart increase in hardness; and you have a less realizing sense of your need of re-

* An aged negro servant.

renewing grace; unless God, in infinite mercy to your soul, should interfere by his resistless power, and rouse you from your slumbers. But you have no reason to expect this, if you refuse to attend to his calls now, in your youthful days. He hath said, his "Spirit shall not always strive with man!" The present is the only time, in which we have any encouragement of success in seeking. Many, many a poor soul has been lost by this guilty procrastination; by putting off for a more convenient season, until they had tired the patience of an holy and all-merciful God, and provoked Him to call them from their probationary state, and seal their damnation sure. Oh if you had been an eye-witness to the distresses of poor Z——, in his last sickness, and heard his bitter cries for mercy, at the throne of grace, you must have discarded for ever, the idea of postponing the work of an age, to a few distracted moments. It was enough to break one's heart, to hear his expressions of agony and despair. A sick and dying bed is a more fit time to live on grace, than to get grace. Oh! the contrast between the condition of poor Z——, on his death bed, and that of one I lately saw triumphing in view of death!

It would give me great satisfaction, could I have one hour's familiar conversation with you, upon the one thing needful. Not knowing the state of your mind, nor the temptations that may befall you in your constant in-

tercourse with the gay circles of the world, my concern for you continually increases. All the consolation I have, is, that you are in the hands of that God, who never did, nor ever will, do wrong to any of his creatures. To his care and mercy I constantly commend you, and all my children; earnestly praying, that he would be all that to them, and do all that for them, which they stand in need of, both for time and for eternity. Oh! that both parent and children might so live, as to meet at Christ's right hand, to spend an eternity of happiness together in that world of glory!

Oh, my dear child, I cannot content myself to lay down my pen, without reiterating my parental injunctions upon you, immediately to attend to the one thing needful. Now in health prepare for sickness; now in life prepare for death; now in time prepare for eternity.

I am near the evening of life; my sun is fast setting; and if God in his providence should so order it, that this should be the last admonition I should have opportunity of giving you; Oh, take it, take it as my dying warning to give yourself no rest, no peace, until "Christ be formed in your heart the hope of glory."

Your once kind mother, now a glorified spirit in heaven, put up many a fervent prayer for her children, while she was upon earth. Her prayers are, no doubt, in remembrance before God, and will be answered in blessings

upon them, if they do not perversely despise their own mercies. Some of them have already experienced the blessed fruit of her prayers, and are, I trust, prepared to share with her, the enjoyments of the heavenly world. Oh, that you would not exclude yourself from their happy society, but choose God for your portion, that you may hereafter live and reign with Him for ever. Let me again entreat you to improve the morning of your days, to obtain that good part, which shall never be taken from you. Religion alone can make you truly happy here. There is more true, solid enjoyment, to be had in one hour's communion with God, even here, than in a whole life of sensual enjoyment.

I hope you will write soon, and open your mind freely on the most important subject. I beg you will not yield to the temptation of reading novels. I have been concerned, lest you should suffer your mind to be poisoned by them. They are the bane of many a youthful mind.

* * * * *

SETH COLEMAN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER F——, AT CLAREMONT.

Amherst, January 28, 1805.

DEAR CHILD,

HAVING a few leisure moments, I am insensibly led to employ them in writing to you. I am anxious to see you, and know

how you do. My anxiety to enjoy the company of my children increases, in proportion as I see the day approaching, when I must go the long journey whence no traveller returns. When I behold my silver locks, and furrowed face, and consider the yearly, and almost monthly decays of my frame, I view my exit as fast advancing. But if my hoary head may only be found in the way of righteousness, it matters little when the summons of my departure from this sinful state arrives. I trust my daily desire and prayer to God is, that I may be made an instrument in his hands of augmenting his glory, and of assisting some of my fellow-creatures in walking in wisdom's peaceful paths.

My desire of helping you forward in your journey heaven-ward, is the principal reason of my writing to you so often.

It is now more than a year, since you began to entertain a hope of having passed from death unto life. But, my child, a bare hope is of little consequence. The great question is not, whether you have a hope, for this will never carry you to heaven ; but, whether you are a new creature, and are savingly interested in the merits of Jesus. Our blessed Lord says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We have great reason to fear that multitudes, placing hope instead of faith, settle down upon their lees, and live from year to year, without any new views of the divine character, or any

suitable discoveries of the corruptions of their own hearts. And you will find it to be the case, that when such are brought upon a sick and dying bed, if you ask them, what are their views of eternity, on the near approach of death, all they can tell you is, they have had a hope, but they cannot see clearly as they would wish. If you ask them further, what was the foundation of their hope, (adding with the Apostle, that “we ought always to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is within us,”) they can give no rational account of the foundation of their hope; and seem to be as much at a loss what to say, or how to understand your meaning, as Nicodemus was to understand the new birth. Men are not wont to act thus injudiciously in the affairs of this life. If a man finds that the title to his lands is precarious, he will give himself no rest, until it is made certain. But in matters of eternal consequence, where the happiness or misery of a never, never dying soul is at stake, any thing will suffice, that will only satisfy conscience for the present.

A cold, careless, formal round of duty, accompanied with a few lazy wishes, will, my child, be of small account, in securing that solid, well grounded hope, which will be to the soul an anchor both sure and stedfast. Multitudes, even of Christians, by inordinate gratification of their fleshly ease, starve the mind, and “live all their life time subject to bondage through fear of death;” never en-

joying that sweet peace and consolation in Christ, which naturally flows from a lively, well grounded faith in him. Great temporal interests are seldom obtained without laborious industry, and rigid economy. So in the divine life; no great advances can be made, nor much visible growth in grace experienced, without labour and pains. Duties, both special and common, must be strictly attended to; the heart and all its secret motions, must be searched with the candle of God's word. Strict inquiry should be often made of our own souls—Do I increase in love to God? Do I feel more filial acquiescence in the allotments of divine Providence, rejoicing that the Lord reigns? Do I feel stronger and stronger emotions of gratitude to God, for redeeming love; and for his special mercy, in “plucking me as a brand from the burning?” Do I take greater delight in the ordinances of the Gospel, in reading God's word, and meditating upon its truths, than heretofore? Are the duties of the closet more and more delightful? Does my love of complacency to God's children, and love of pity for a wicked world, increase? Such like questions, we ought frequently to put to our consciences, that our hearts may not deceive us. A plant cannot flourish when it is choked with weeds: neither will grace grow in the heart, without mature cultivation. “Be not deceived,” my dear child, “God is not mocked.” “If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our

hearts, and knoweth all things." The inmost recesses of our hearts are naked and open to his all-searching eyes. To our own Master we stand or fall. It will be of little consequence to us, when we appear at the bar of God, what the world thought of us. Then, "He that is filthy will be filthy still, and he that is righteous will be righteous still." As death leaves us, judgment will find us; "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we go." Mankind seem to act upon the sentiment, that in the outward change of death, the dispositions of the soul receive an inward change. This is one of the thousand wiles that Satan practices to decoy unguarded souls, and people the regions of woe. Sinners are awfully ignorant of the nature of their hearts. They are little aware how much they are indebted to restraining grace, for those amiable qualities and actions which they call goodness, and upon which they pride themselves so much. As a refractory beast is curbed by bit and bridle; so the sinner is kept by restraining grace, from acting out, to full length, that depravity, that enmity to God and all good, which makes hell a place of torment, and would, if unrestrained, deluge the world with misery. Yes, these hearts, which, before the plague of them is discovered to us, we are prone to think pretty good, will, when the restraint is removed by the separation of soul and body, rave and rend, curse and blaspheme. There is not a

disposition exercised by any of our race, in heaven or hell, but what was possessed, in embryo, in this state of probation. The difference is only in degree. The love of God, zeal in his cause, resignation to the divine government, gratitude and praise for redeeming love, admiring and adoring views of the infinite perfections of Deity, which Christians have in so partial a degree here, are perfected in heaven, and raise them to immortal blessedness. And the indifference, or, more properly, hatred to God and his cause, opposition to the divine will, ingratitude for redeeming love, insensibility to the glories of the divine character, and love of sin, which is so fully manifested by the unrenewed here, are in hell, ripened into the perfect malice of its present wretched inhabitants.

I must enjoin it upon you, not to rest satisfied with any supposed attainments in the divine life. The Prophet, you know, says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Contentment, from a fancied title to heaven, is a dark sign of hypocrisy; and multitudes no doubt there are, who plume themselves with sanguine hopes of heaven, who will learn their mistake, (too late, alas!) finding themselves engulfed in the horrors of despair. Our Saviour says, that many in the last day shall say unto him, "Lord, Lord," &c.; to whom he will say, "I know you not; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." It is beyond the

power of men or angels to describe the dreadful anguish of such a disappointment. I hope you are prepared to have the bridegroom open to you, and receive you unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let your lamps be trimmed and burning. If you have ever, in reality, tasted the sweets of true religion, though you may sometimes decline, you will habitually be engaged in seeking for more. One cannot taste the grace of God without conceiving a permanent relish for spiritual enjoyments. The more a Christian sees of the beauties of the divine character, the more he longs for greater discoveries of, and conformity to it. The blessed image of Christ appears more and more lovely :

“And happy they,
“That love the way,
“To Zion’s hill.”

You are anxious to know how I got home when I left you. I had a sweet ride. The two first days, the boisterous winds gave me no trouble, as I was going before them. Having nothing to interrupt my meditations on eternal things, I had much enjoyment in communion with God and Christ. My heart was drawn forth in admiring wonder, love and praise, by contemplating the height and depth, length and breadth of redeeming love. My mind was so enveloped in these interesting contemplations, that the time past insensibly away, and I found myself at Brattleborough before I was aware of it. From there I had

the company of Mrs. D——, who joined in religious conversation.

* * * * *

I am anxious to learn the particular state of your mind, in regard to religion; and hope you will favour me with a minute account of your feelings. I hope you have true faith in the Saviour, and that you will “give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that you shall be neither barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Yours in the tenderest bonds of affection,
S. COLEMAN.



TO A GRAND-DAUGHTER, CLAREMONT,

Amherst, Feb. 4, 1805.

MY DEAR E——,

SUFFER your affectionate grand-parent, for a moment, to disengage your attention from the things of time and sense, and invite it to those solemn things that concern the salvation of your never-dying soul. However the conduct of the thoughtless world may deride, be assured, that the subjects pertaining to religion are the most interesting, noble and important,

that ever occupied the tongues or pens of men. They are subjects which the angels of heaven desire to look into, and in which the infinite God interests himself with unceasing attention.

I am not acquainted with your particular views and feelings upon moral subjects : but you are of an age which is naturally calculated to fill the mind with a thousand pleasing anticipations and delusive ideas of future happiness ; and to lead it off from serious contemplations upon heavenly and divine things.—Happiness is the grand object of the eager pursuit of mankind. But alas ! how few, comparatively, ever find it ! because they seek it in those things, in which it never was, nor ever will be found.

You have been instructed in the holy Scriptures, which teach you the striking fact, that you are hastening to an eternity of happiness or misery. And oh, that you would consider, in these your youthful days, the things that belong to your everlasting peace ! lest, by unwarrantable delay, they should be for ever hidden from your eyes. Christ says, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God : ” and the most so far believe it, as to give a cold assent to its truth ; but they cannot attend to it now, and thereby practically say to Christ, as Felix said to Paul, “ Go thy way for this time : when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee. ” They intend, indeed, to secure salvation before they die ; but the grand adversary of souls,

and their own deceitful hearts, flatter them with a more convenient season. One delay only produces another; and having once put off, they put off again with less reluctance. 'They 'resolve, and re-resolve,' and most commonly live and 'die the same.' Every broken resolution hardens the heart, and adds a new weight to a load of sins. Is it wise, is it safe, to depend on such a bubble of the stream? By determining to delay, we determine to sin: therefore, the forming of such a resolution is high-handed rebellion against the King of kings. And dare you, my child, set the eternal God, and his word, more and more at defiance? to slight the blessed Saviour yet more and more, who shed his blood to redeem you? to grieve the Holy Spirit of God yet more and more? Will not the time past of your life suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh? Will you add sin to sin, and iniquity to iniquity? If your soul is ever worth saving from hell and destruction, why not now? If it will ever be necessary to repent of sin, and accept of Christ, why not do it now, while it is called to-day; lest, in a moment when you think not, the eternal night of death come upon you? The present is the only moment of which you are sure. If you are unwilling to repent and be saved now, what evidence have you that you ever shall be willing, or ever will be saved? All the invitations and promises of God are confined to the present time. We never read, "If thou believest" *to-morrow*, "thou shalt be

saved ;” or, “Him that cometh unto me” *to-morrow*, “I will in no wise cast out.” But the Scripture saith, “Repent, and believe the Gospel,” *now* ; for “*now* is the accepted time, and *now* is the day of salvation.” “God commands all men every where to repent.” “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” God’s commands, in these requirements, are absolute, and universal ; and he will not be disobeyed with impunity. Oh my dear child ! you must feel sorrow for sin, either here, after a godly sort ; or hereafter, without avail. The unalterable determination of Jehovah has gone forth, that “he will by no means clear the guilty.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Multitudes have delayed repentance, to their everlasting ruin. “Procrastination is the thief of time ;” and has cheated millions and millions of souls out of eternal life.

God awfully threatens delaying sinners.— Turn to the first chapter of Proverbs ; read from the 24th to the 31st verse ; and there you will see what delaying sinners have to expect at God’s hands. Deceive not yourself with the inconsistent idea of repenting and turning to God, on a sick and dying bed. It is no time for repentance, when the sinner is turning his fainting head from side to side upon his pillow ; his body convulsed with racking pain ; his mind, if not bereft of reason, yet confused and agitated ; and pale Death, in all his horrid aspect, staring him in the face. Is this a time in which to do the work of an age ? The

Christian finds his whole life short enough to "make his calling and election sure." Besides, you have not the least assurance, that at this awful crisis, you will have any sense of your spiritual condition. Remember that God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Many, who have, at different times in life, been anxious for their souls, and perhaps put off with the secret expectation of repenting in time of immediate danger, have, when their last sickness came, manifested most awful insensibility about a future state.

Old age is equally unfavourable to repentance. How many do we see, whose locks are whitened by length of years, who are yet in their unrepented sins, hardened to an inveterate and almost hopeless degree! Like the aged oak, stripped of its branches by the hand of time, when visited by the genial rays of the sun, instead of putting forth leaves, it becomes more dry and withered. Such is the aged sinner: he is neither allured by the kind invitations of the Gospel, nor moved by the terrors of the Law. The same sun that softens wax, hardens clay. Think not, because you are in the heat of youthful blood, that your mountain stands strong, and you may safely take your fill of earthly gaieties and pleasures. Have you not seen many as young as yourself, and to human appearance as likely to live, suddenly cut off, with little or no warning? And what assurance have you of life, more than they had, a few hours before they were called

to appear before God, to give up their account, and to have their destination fixed for a never-ending eternity? Would you not be affrighted, were you made to believe that you must die, and be arraigned at God's tremendous bar, the next day, the next week, the next month, or the next year? Thousands, who one day felt themselves as secure as you may now feel yourself, the next were in the eternal world. What lease have you of life, more than they had? The delay of death will not in the least lessen the consequences of it. When the solemn hour shall arrive, it will be as great a reality as though it were to take place this day or night. It will be death, judgment, eternity! What would be your feelings, should you hear an audible voice from the excellent glory, calling you by name, and telling you that you must soon die and go to judgment—that eternal consequences were depending upon a little span of time—that unless you repented of your sins, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and turned to him with all your heart, you must die eternally, and go down to the lake of fire and brimstone, there to be tormented, day and night, with devils and damned spirits, for ever and ever? But all this, and a thousand times more, is told you in the written word of God. Nothing can be more presumptuous, therefore, than to neglect the call of God's word.

Oh my dear girl! I cannot lay down my pen, without reiterating my request to you to

attend to these important suggestions; for it is not a vain thing; it is your life, even the life of your soul, which is of more value than ten thousand temporal lives. Our blessed Lord says, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" A person who has an interest in Christ, though reduced to penury and want, is beyond comparison happier than the greatest prince upon earth, without this inheritance. He has enjoyments that the world knows not of, which it can neither give nor take away. Read from the 49th to the 58th verse of the sixth chapter of John. Religion alone will yield you real, permanent satisfaction and happiness, console you under the trials of life, soothe the bed of death, and afford an entrance into the eternal felicities of the heavenly world. Be assured too, that religion is not necessary, merely to shield us against the storms of Divine wrath, and secure heaven hereafter, but to supply the want of any real happiness in this life. Mere earthly pleasures, and enjoyments, however refined, shrink into insignificance and nothing, in comparison with those noble, dignified pleasures to which the religion of Jesus raises the soul. These are heavenly pleasures; and often cheer and animate the soul in troubles and afflictions, which would at once sink the spirits, and overcome the hearts of those who are without a reconciled God in the world.

Oh that you might be brought to taste of the pure enjoyments of religion, to exchange the husks of earth for the true Bread that came down from heaven! You are, indeed, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water of real comfort is. Oh that you might be brought to drink of those living springs, that flow at Christ's right hand! Oh, that you understood, in this your day, the things that belong to your peace, before they are for ever hidden from your eyes!

Your affectionate grand parent,

S. COLEMAN.



TO HIS SON W——, MIDDLEFIELD.

Amherst, October 22, 1805.

DEAR CHILD,

PERMIT your aged parent to interrupt you with a few scattered ideas upon the all-important concern, for which we are sent into the world, and continued in this state of trial and probation.

If you look around on your children, and call up your parental feelings, you will not think strange that one, who is just going off the stage of life, should be anxious to improve every opportunity to try to stimulate his children to assiduity, in making the calling and election of their immortal souls sure. Our stupidity about spiritual concerns is such, that the constant use of means is necessary to

keep up a sense of their importance in our minds. Sensible objects are suffered to engross our attention, while the things of faith, being out of sight, are wont to be neglected. Through manifold temptations from the world, and from our own deceitful hearts, we are apt to conduct upon the imagination that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant; forgetting that we know not what a day may bring forth, and that the shortest period is long enough to land our immortal souls in the world of unembodied spirits, and fix our destination for eternity. How few professing Christians live, to outward appearance, different from the men of the world! Who would ever suspect that they considered themselves heirs of eternal life, if it was not for their profession? We are directed so to live, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. Christ calls his true followers, the salt of the earth; and says, "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" Alas! what just occasion do many give to the enemies of religion, to speak reproachfully of the very cause they profess to honour! How often is the saying of the Prophet verified, that religion hath received its worst wound in the house of its friends? Have not the scoffing world some reason to think that religion is, as they say, all enthusiasm, the effect of heated imagination; when they see persons all engaged, for a while, in religion, unwilling to

converse upon any other subject ; and then see their conversation entirely changed, and their mouths shut, when religious topics are introduced. It is a matter of just lamentation, that the sacred cause should receive so much injury from such a quarter. Respecting those who inflict such wounds upon the cause of their Saviour, one of two things is certainly true. Either they are the unhappy subjects of self-deception ; or, they have backslidden, and become enveloped in the world. For that which is uppermost in the mind, will be foremost upon the tongue. And Christ saith, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” How *soon* a Christian *may*, or how *far* he *can* backslide, or how long continue in a backslidden state, we cannot determine from any thing in the Bible. But for a person to rest contented in this situation, and think himself safe, because he has a hope, without the evidence of any fruit, is as dark a sign of an hypocrite, as any I know of. The first symptoms of declension should give us the alarm. When one hears the cry of fire, how does it add wings to his feet ! and how is his anxiety increased, until he knows where to look for the devouring element ! and if he has the least idea that it is in his own habitation, he will almost run frantic. But alas ! when everlasting burnings are concerned, the person who is self-deceived, will remain perfectly secure and senseless, though he has ever so much reason to fear that

his own soul is in imminent danger. Instead of renouncing his hope, he will still keep brooding over it, and hovering around it, like the miller around the candle, until it suddenly falls into it, and perishes. The closer a hypocrite hugs his hope, the more sure it will be to envelope him in the fire of God's wrath. I believe there are more persons lost by means of a hope, than there are that perish without one. In placing hope instead of faith, they forget that faith without works is dead. True religion is a growing principle, where it is implanted, and will not long lie smothered in the rubbish of this world.

We ought, therefore, to be frequently comparing our present views and feelings with our past ones, in order to determine whether we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We ought often to summon our hearts to the tribunal of conscience, and ask, Is my love for God and Christ stronger than in times past? Does my trust in God increase, by feeling myself more and more resigned to be wholly at his disposal, strongly persuaded that the Judge of all the earth orders every thing for the greatest good of the universe? Do I hate sin more, and love holiness better? Am I more and more grieved to see God's holy law violated, and his ordinances and Sabbaths profaned? Does my love of complacency for God's children, and love of pity for a wicked world, increase? Many of the like questions, we

ought to ask ourselves, in our seasons of meditation and self-examination; and demand a deliberate answer from our consciences, having them properly informed from the word of God.

Many persons are wont to excuse themselves from spending time to read the Scriptures, to converse and meditate on the things of religion, on account of their cares and worldly business. What is this but frankly acknowledging, that they are not so much interested with the things of the kingdom of God, as with those of time and sense? For how few are there of those who make this complaint, that could not relinquish some of their concerns; and thus, by lessening their cares, be able to redeem some time to devote to their precious souls? Mankind in general find little difficulty in making sacrifices of worldly interest for worldly pleasure; when, if the object had been a religious one, mountains of difficulties would have appeared in the way. Alas, alas! how grovelling is our nature! What is the life of the body, when compared with the life of the soul? Merely "a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But when attempting to describe the worth of the soul, (or the worth of time, as it is a state of probation for endless happiness or misery,) all language fails, and we are obliged to resort to the musings of expressive silence.

I am by no means insensible of the multiplicity of avocations, that crowd upon all heads

of families, who are surrounded with an increasing progeny. And it is our indispensable duty to attend to our worldly concerns; but our attention must be in subordination to "the one thing needful." I believe it to be one of the most difficult duties that is required of the Christian in the present life, to have so much to do with the world as duty requires, and not to be entangled and captivated with it, to the neglect of spiritual duties. When the Pharisees made their boast of paying tithes of mint, and rue, and other herbs, Christ tells them, "These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the others undone;" (meaning, the weightier matters of the law.) Christ has told us, that our heavenly Father knoweth that we stand in need of these worldly comforts: but his direction is, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and, adds the promise, "all these things shall be added unto you."——Not long since, I heard a young person say, he found that his worldly interest evidently prospered much better, since he paid attention to religion, than before.—Paul saith to Timothy, "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." When we pursue our worldly business with a single eye to the glory of God, we may depend on his blessing to accompany our endeavours, as far as shall be most for his glory, and our best good. Multitudes experience much unneces-

sary trouble, for the want of a confidential belief, that nothing, not even the most trifling circumstance, takes place, in the natural or moral world, without the permission and overruling direction of Divine Providence, as much as in the drowning of the old world, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. With Divine Power, nothing is hard. It is as easy for God to create a world, as an insect; and to take cognizance of all the most minute circumstances, as those of magnitude.

We should at all times maintain a lively sense of the omniscience of God; and of our absolute and universal accountability. This would prove an incentive to us to regulate our conduct by the rules of his word, and tend to preserve in our minds a reverential awe before him. All will endeavour to behave with decorum before the great ones of the earth; but how few have we reason to think, are awed, in any proper degree, before God! If they can secrete themselves from the eyes of their fellow-creatures, they vainly imagine that they are safe; forgetting that "the darkness and the light are both alike to Him with whom we have to do." They seem never to have reflected, that for every idle (not to say profane) word we speak, we must give an account in judgment! Oh that we could but live in constant reference to this solemn day!

My dear child; these things can never lie with too much weight upon our minds: we

cannot have too lively a sense of their importance. It is a great thing to have a proper sense of them : in short, it is a great thing to be a Christian. It is long since I thought I had some sense of the worth of an immortal soul, the blessing of the Gospel, the beauty of holiness, and the transcendant glories of the divine character : but my ideas on these all-interesting subjects have of late been so enlarged, that my former views appear to vanish like smoke.

When Christians reflect upon the distinguishing love of God, in selecting them from the common herd of lost sinners, (when those, as good by nature, and better by practice, are left,) what wonder and astonishment is excited in their minds ! What lively gratitude and praise is enkindled in their hearts ! No time is long enough for them to render ascriptions of praise to God and the Lamb. Eternity alone will be sufficient to sound the praises of redeeming love. That, doubtless, will be the happy employment of the saints in light for ever and ever. And that you and all my children, and children's children, may belong to that incomprehensibly happy number, is the daily prayer of

Your affectionate Father,

S. COLEMAN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER MRS. H——, CANANDAIGUA.

Amherst, June 16, 1813.

DEAR CHILD,

YOUR letter has filled us with emotions not easily described. We had our anticipations of a very agreeable visit from you, wrought up to the highest pitch. But they are at once down. The question, relative to your visiting N. England, it seems is settled. And we are left too, in total suspense, as to any future period upon which to fix our anticipations again. This disappointment is well calculated to teach us not to have raised expectations of earthly happiness, but to remember that nothing here is certain, save death. The more we are elated in the anticipation of enjoyment, the more we are chagrined when disappointed. It is characteristic of a puerile mind, to be depressed, or pertubated, with any worldly disappointment. It is wisdom to hold all our secular concerns, and earthly enjoyments, as in our hands, that we may readily lay them down when they are called for. By this means, unforeseen casualties and disappointments will sit comparatively light upon the mind. Oh! that our hearts may be weaned from the delusive charms of this ensnaring world, and that we may live above it, while we live in it.

I thank my dear child for her affectionate invitation to me to visit her. I have long had it in pleasing contemplation; but whether I

shall ever be able to realize it, is uncertain. No earthly gratification would more gladden my heart, than to see you at your own house, converse with you in your domestic circle, and embrace the dear babes. Nor can I well brook the idea of never (at least for once,) seeing the place where my dear child expects to spend her days, and most probably leave her body, till the morning of the resurrection. But I shall never think of taking the journey without having one of your brothers to accompany me, and it will be inconvenient for either of them this season : and what another season may bring forth, we know not.

You have been experimentally taught, how futile it is to calculate for weeks, and much more for years. The infirmities of old age are fast creeping upon me, and I can plainly see, that they progress every year. The functions of my body, and the powers of my mind, are constantly in a retrograde motion. However, I do not abandon the idea altogether, of visiting you at some future period, if my resolution be not too much diminished.

Although your old father appears to stand foremost on the catalogue of death's victims, having lived beyond the common age of man ; yet it will be no new dispensation of Providence, if you should all go first, and I be left, like the lonely turtle, to perch alone. We are all witnesses that youthful blood, the blooming cheek, consolidated muscle, and the most elastic nerves, are no security against the shafts of

death. We often see those, who appear to have longevity written upon their countenance, suddenly cut down by the stroke of death; while those, who are stooping for very age, are passed by. We ought, always to bear in mind that solemn admonition of our blessed Lord, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

I trust you are not altogether insensible of your need of Divine aid, in your present situation. A state of society, that excludes religious conversation, is very unfavourable for growth in grace. A person must have a great degree of grace, to be able to keep faith alive, and animated, without religious conversation. It is as necessary to keep religion alive in the heart, as bellows are to enkindle a decaying fire. It is very necessary for you to set a double guard upon your heart, lest you be overpowered with temptation, and make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. The Psalmist said, he would set a double guard upon his heart, in situations of peculiar danger.

I will here subjoin a few questions proper for professors to ask themselves; which I find in an ancient author: and though not expressed in modern style, yet are interesting and important.

"Do we feel ourselves humbled and melted before God, under a sense of our unworthiness and guilt? Have we true hatred of sin, and a tenderness of conscience, that will not

admit of its least suspieion, or appearance ? Do we find a most cordial readiness to accept of salvation, in the method God has proposed ? And does redeeming grace appear marvellous, and unspeakably precious in our eyes ? Are our hearts disentangled from this vain world ? Do we bear about with us the vivid apprehension, and the overpowering impressions of invisible objects ? Do we experience a desire after God, and a love towards him, as our supreme good, and all-sufficient portion ? Do we feel pleasure and liberty in sacred exercises ? Are we ready to submit to every weight of affliction, that an all-wise Providence may lay upon us ? Is our dependence upon the Almighty, for guidance, protection and blessing ? and can we bear the thought of being without him in the world ? As streams derived from the fountains, do we exercise purity and temperance as to ourselves ? and are we patterns of truth, justice and benevolence, among our fellow-creatures ? And in the unclouded discovery of these tendencies and dispositions of soul, do we feel a placid composure, nay more, a transporting joy, as being satisfied from these evidences, that we are in the favour of God, and have a title to the future glory ? Then may we warrantably conclude, without any special revelation, that we are under the influences of the Spirit, as a sanctifier and comforter, For these are effects worthy of a God to produce : these are the effects we may suppose he works, if he makes any vouchsafements to our world."

Permit me, my dear child, to add a word of admonition to you, to look well to your heart, and see to it, that between the snares of gay circles of pleasure, and the care of domestic concerns, it be not diverted from a proper attention to the "one thing needful." The objects of time and sense, being present, and seen by the bodily eye, are peculiarly prone to attract the heart, to the exclusion of the things of God, which are unseen and eternal, and beheld only by the eye of faith. Oh let your mind be nobly elevated above the transitory trifles of a day ! May you grow in the grace of God, and in the ennobling knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Few, within the sphere of my acquaintance, if any, enjoy life (in a moral view,) better than ——. He lives much of his time upon that substance, which the world can neither give nor take away.

Oh for the enjoyment of seeing you ! But whether we shall ever have another personal interview, God only knows. You are never out of my mind long at a time. It is a long time since I have omitted to go, for all my children, to the Throne of Grace, twice a day ; and I trust I never shall, while I live.

Adieu. Our love to all.

S. COLEMAN.

Farwell Address.

IT has been the laudable practice of many of our pious ancestors, (in imitation of patriarchal example,) when they were about to leave the world, not only to set their house in order, but to call their posterity together, and to leave with them their dying admonition and benediction. Following their example, I shall now attempt to suggest a few ideas which I most ardently wish, might, by the blessing of God, prove to be of some assistance to you, in the regulation of your life, and also stimulate you to a more faithful discharge of duty.

Long, my dear children, have I been prayerfully waiting for this happy day, when I should once more see you all together in this world; "that my soul might bless you before I die, and go to my long home," and that I might also have opportunity to give you my last parental warnings, counsels and instructions: and as such, I wish you all to receive this.* Your present locations are so far distant from me, and from each other, that it is very uncertain whether I ever see you all again, either collectively or individually, on this side the grave. And if, by the leave of Providence, we should have another meeting here, perhaps I should not be as capable of advising and admonishing you then, as I am now. I have arrived to my seventieth year, which is the scriptural boundary for the life of man—the day is far spent—the shadow is fast lengthening—the sun has almost reached the hori-

[* He had transcribed a copy of this Address for each child, which he presented to those of them, at this time, who had not previously received it.]

zon---and I have long worn the grave blossoms on my head.

In speaking of my departure, I would do it with the greatest solemnity; as a thing, that of all others most nearly concerns me: for we cannot die but once; and after death cometh the judgment.

These lines I now leave with you, that when the hand which penned them is hid in the grave, and the spirit that dictated them has entered the invisible world, you may, as in a mirror, behold your father's face, and be assisted in bringing to your recollection the sentiments that he embraced, which have been his support through life, and which he confidently hopes (by the grace of God assisting,) will be his support in death.

It has long been my constant and habitual endeavour, so to familiarize the subject of death, that when the solemn hour shall arrive, it may cause no terror or dismay. This, I am sensible, is not in the power of the creature alone to effect; but, like every other attainment, is the gift of God. Yet, as he is usually pleased to work by means, I have strove to disengage my affections as much as possible from the world; and to keep my lamp trimmed and burning, that I may be ready, at any time, to meet my Lord.

No subject has ever excited such anxiety in my heart, unless it be the salvation of my own soul, as the future happiness of my children, and my children's children. This alone has influenced me to address you at this time, and in this manner; and also led me most earnestly to seek the Divine assistance, that I may be enabled to say something, which, by his blessing, might be a means of stimulating you so to live, as will give you pleasure on a retrospect at death, and prepare you all for a far more happy meeting at last, at Christ's right hand. Oh! what a blessed meeting will it be, when parents,

and those who have been united in the tenderest bonds of mutual love and friendship, shall meet in heaven, never more to be separated while God exists, or eternity endures ! And how will the happiness of those be enlarged, who shall be able to say to their Judge, Lord, here are we, and the souls which thou hast put under our care, to nurture and train up for thee !

While you were around me in your minority, I flattered myself that I was enabled, in some good degree, to discharge the parental trust ; but it has occasioned me many painful reflections in the evening of my life, that I was not more faithful to you, in your childhood ; which error, I hope you will all avoid ; and thereby prevent those self-reproaches, which the consciousness of the neglect of any known duty, will occasion in old age. I have, however, abundant occasion to bless God, that he has not suffered any great or fatal evils to result from my neglects ; but has given me the happiness of saying, that I have no occasion to reproach any of you, with embracing erroneous sentiments, or indulging in vicious practices. But when I say this, I would have you sensible, that if you are made to differ at all from the vilest of sinners, it is not from any thing in you ; but wholly owing to the restraining grace of God. Let him then have all the glory.

When Joshua, just before his departure, had assembled the Elders of Israel, to address them for the last time, his first and principal object appeared to be, to persuade them to choose Israel's God, for their God. This he did, by informing them, how ready and willing God was to be their God, if they would but take him for their portion, and serve him with a willing mind.

Thus, my children, would I exhort and persuade you in this address. To have the eternal God for our portion, comprehends more than our finite capa-

cities can fathom. His wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and faithfulness, are all engaged to do us good.* God has said every thing in his word, that language could express, to show his willingness to accept of returning sinners, and to be a Father unto them.† And His promises are no less full.‡

Now, how incredulous and stupid must they be, who can read these passages, and a multitude of others, to the same import, in God's word, and then doubt of His willingness to accept of the repenting, returning sinner, and of being his everlasting friend and portion in Christ Jesus. This abundantly proves the truth of the Prophet's declaration, that "madness is in the heart of man while he lives."

The living example, the last words and death-bed joys of good men, in all ages, have spoken the importance of choosing God for our portion, with a meaning and energy, of which mere language is incapable. And even wicked men, on a dying bed, have often, under deep conviction of their folly and guilt, inimitably spoke the necessity of this choice, by their horrors of conscience, their self-reproaches, and earnest cries for mercy.

As you would wish, my children, to avoid this awful end, be entreated to make this choice in season, that you may be prepared to leave the world, before it leaves you. For leave it you must, either from choice or compulsion. And is it not better to leave it by the allurements of Grace, than by the violence of death? Oh! leave the world, while it is in your power to prove that you relinquish it, for conscience sake. Oh! leave it, as you will certainly wish you had done when you enter on the eternal state. Now show yourselves to belong to that class, in which you hope to appear at the day of judgment.

* See Rom. viii. 28.—First Cor. iii. 22, 23.—Rev. xxi. 7.

† See Prov. ix. 1, 6.—Isai. lv. 1, 3.

‡ See Matth. vii. 7, 8.—John vi. 37.—Deut. xxx. 19.

But I presume, from your profession, that the most or all of you are ready to answer and say, I hope I have already made this choice. I hope so too—and be it so. But have you complied with the requisition of our blessed Lord, and given all *diligence* to make your calling and election sure? Do you live in the enjoyment of that hope, trust and confidence in God, through the merits of his Son, which can buoy your spirits above the fears of death and a future judgment? Or do you live all your life time subject to bondage through fear of death? It is madness in the extreme, for any one to live in uncertainty about a subject of such infinite importance; or to rest satisfied with a bare probability. It is a plain mark of a hypocrite not to be anxious to obtain more grace than is just sufficient to carry one to heaven. Such would do well to consider Paul's exhortation to the Hebrews, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." True it is, that the least degree of Grace will raise a soul to heaven; but that ought by no means to be an excuse for presumptuous confidence; but rather an inducement to us to get that degree of it, that will bring heaven down to us.

My dear children, frequently call to mind, how fast precious time is spending—how uncertain a blessing it is—how much work you have to do to prepare for an endless eternity—and how little time you may have to do it in. Be daily and assiduously engaged in examining your hearts, to know whether the foundation upon which you have built, is the sure Rock of ages; lest, when your time is done, your work should be undone. It can be but a short time, at the longest, before we must all stand before the awful bar of God, to give an account how we have occupied with the talents committed to our trust. I, how I have discharged my parental duty to your precious

and immortal souls ; and you, how you have improved under the feeble instructions, that your sinful, unworthy parent has been enabled to give. And what if both parent and children should be found at Christ's left hand ; and you should say, If my father had done his duty, I should not have come to this place of torment ? Oh dreadful, inexpressibly dreadful thought ! to have our children be as lighted torches, to conduct us down to the regions " of blackness of darkness for ever ! " The consternation and anguish of such a parent, must surpass the power of men and angels to describe, or the utmost capacity of a finite mind to conceive. But shocking as the idea is, it will undoubtedly be the unhappy lot of many a graceless parent. Shudder, O my soul, at the thought ! and may the idea be an effectual monitor to you all. It is vain for any to flatter themselves, that they shall ever attain an assurance of their title to heaven, by a few idle wishes and listless endeavours. Our blessed Lord has directed us to " strive," (or as it is in the original, " agonize,) to enter in at the strait gate." Again, he tells us, that " the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Do any of you ask, how you should live so as to grow in grace, and thereby " make your calling and election sure ? " I answer ; religion must be the first and main object of your pursuit, to which all secular employments must be subservient. When you awake in the morning, let that God have the first place in your thoughts and affections, who raises you from sleep, that striking image of death, and restores the use of your mental faculties. Like David, be able to say, " When I awake, I am still with thee." Consider that your bed might have been your grave : that many every night " go down to the chambers of death ; " and what would probably have been your situation, had this been your case. Consider also

what a mercy sleep is, to fit us for the duties of life ; and let your hearts ascend in gratitude and praise for the mercies of the night, and the light of a new day. Realize the blessing of having another day added to your short life ; and what many a poor, dying creature would give, to have one day more, in which to make his peace with God. Retain a deep sense of the preciousness of time. A heathen could say, when he had spent a day without doing good, " I have lost a day : " And another, that " he is not worthy the name of a man, who spends a whole day in worldly pleasure. " Remember, that upon this pittance of time, hang eternal consequences ; for it is the only space we shall have, in which to make preparation for an eternal state of existence. Therefore suffer it not to be trifled away, as if you had no God to serve, or soul to save. Before you enter on the business of the day, visit your closet, saying to the cares of the world, Stay here till I go yonder and worship. And when you shut the door of your closet, be sure that you shut out vain and wandering thoughts, so destructive to elevated devotion. Always remember, you are going to speak to that God, before whose awful presence, angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and all the heavenly hosts, veil their faces in reverence, not being able to behold his glory. Ever prostrate yourselves before the Most High with profound awe and humility ; for he hath said, " I will have respect to the lowly in heart. " But come with holy confidence, as to a gracious Father, remembering that prayer is the key of heaven : And not only make conscience of attending statedly upon the duty, but be very conscientious how you pray. Never be contented with the body of prayer, without the soul. And when you engage in the busy cares of the world, let your mind always be in a proper frame for putting up ejaculatory petitions : that while your hands are performing earthly duties,

your heart may still hold intercourse with heaven.— And when you come to the close of the day, never presume to lay your head upon your pillow to sleep, without invoking the divine blessing and protection ; remembering how many have closed their eyes in healthful sleep, and yet have awoke in the world of unbodied spirits.

Be very careful not to assume the form of godliness, to take away your reproach, while you neglect the power which will take away your sin. Beware of resorting to the form, for the preservation of peace within. This subterfuge will only amuse and quiet conscience for awhile, but soon prepare it for severer pangs of remorse. You may, in this way, deceive yourselves, and think that you are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ;” but will soon find, to your unspeakable disappointment, that you are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” and in need of all things.

Always set apart a portion of time, every week, and if possible, every day, for serious and close meditation. Be not afraid, that a little time spent alone will make you melancholy. You will find that you are never less alone, than in converse with God. Certainly, that Being who makes others good company, must needs be himself the best of all company. A certain portion of time cannot be more profitably spent, than in meditation and self-examination.

I cannot close this address, without suggesting something relative to the education of your children. Heads of families are constituted by God, governors of those little communities. These are the first nurseries for Church and State. Here also is laid the foundation for heaven, or hell. To you is committed the care of immortal souls. Guard well the sacred deposit. Unto parents is entrusted the important business of rearing up a generation to serve

the Lord, when their places are empty. If they neglect the moral education of their children, and to train them up in the fear of the Lord, how will the prosperity of the Church of God be insured, when the present generation have passed off the stage?—"Our fathers, where are they?" Sleeping in the dust, where we must soon be. And who will fill our places in the house of God, and rise up in our stead for the support of religion, among those who succeed us? From whom can it be expected, but from our children? Parents rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, to advance the fortunes of their children, to furnish them with dubious possessions, which may be blessings or curses, according as they are improved or abused. But few, comparatively, manifest as much engagedness for the spiritual interests of their children. This, to use a very plain simile, is like trimming and adorning the clothes of a child which is falling into the fire, and is in the utmost danger of perishing.

The wise man tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is an undoubted fact, that the characters of mankind are generally formed at an early period. Soft clay may be moulded into any form you please. A young plant may be bent by a gentle hand. The character engraved on the tender bark, grows deeper and larger on the advancing tree. So the impressions that are made on the minds of children, are seldom if ever wholly eradicated. If they are early directed in the path of virtue, and shown the danger of pursuing contrary courses, they will seldom lose its influence. Childhood is the best and most convenient time for conveying moral instruction. Children should be early taught that there is a God; and that he is the supreme Governor both of the natural and moral world. They should be taught the infinite greatness, goodness, and glory of

his character ; that they are wholly dependent upon him for life and every enjoyment ; and that they shall one day be called before his righteous tribunal, to render an account of their conduct in this world. For what can have a more direct tendency to deter the young traveller from setting out in vicious courses, than to impress his mind with a belief that all his actions are constantly in the view of that holy Being, who will bring every secret thing into judgment ?— They must also be early taught “the fear of the Lord, which is understanding.” They must be taught the divinity of the Scriptures ; that they were given by inspiration of God, as a perfect rule of life ; and that by them they must one day be adjudged to endless happiness or endless misery.

Parents often fall into a great error, by telling their children, if they will be good, God will love and bless them. For such instructions tend to inspire them with pride and vain-glory, by leading them to believe that God is pleased with their good deeds, and that they can secure their salvation by their own moral conduct. Whereas they should rather be informed that they are sinners ; but that God has given his Son to die for such ; and if they sincerely repent, he will forgive their sins, will make them happy, and bless them with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

The instructions of many parents are entirely lost, for the want of a corresponding example. The influence of example is more powerful than the laws of the land. Hence, if parents neglect to govern their tongues and their tempers, children will neglect to govern theirs. If they treat their superiors, inferiors, and equals, in an improper manner, children will be sure to follow their example. If they disregard and violate the Sabbath, their children will do the same. If they are prayerless and worldly-minded, their children will imbibe the same spirit. If they

are given to vanity, their children will be still more vain. If they are regardless of civil restraint, their children will be unwholesome members of society. In short, children will be more influenced by the example of their parents, than by all their precepts and instruction.

It is very natural for parents to feel an anxious solicitude about their children, should they be called to leave them in this vain and sinful world. But we should console ourselves with the idea, that we leave them in the hands of that God, who has supported and sustained us all our days; and who, if we have true faith in him, will visit and take care of them also: "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive," saith the Lord. Although we die Christ lives, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever: therefore the Psalmist saith, "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." Your offspring have the same God to protect *them*, that protected *you*; the same word to direct and comfort them; the same almighty Saviour to redeem them; the same rich covenant of grace for their security; a covenant "well ordered in all things, and sure." And are the stores of God's bounty and grace exhausted? Doth his promise fail? Why then should we suspect that our children will not be the objects of his gracious care?

But to conclude: Let the expectation of death quicken you to do what you can for God and your generation. If death find you employed in works of benevolence and duty, with your lamps trimmed and burning, you need not fear; for God will surely visit you with his light and love, bring you to the heavenly country, and finally establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

It is the ardent prayer of your affectionate father, that you may live together, in this world, as brethren; "endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond

of peace ;” never suffering any “root of bitterness to spring up,” that may destroy the happiness of your fraternal friendship. The most of you are professedly journeying to the same eternal home ; and whatever different subordinate views you may have, your principal and ultimate end is (I trust,) the same. The heavenly Jerusalem is the place where you all hope to arrive at last.

Although you are providentially so located, that you can but seldom see each other, yet be constant in praying for each other, that your prayers may form a sweet concert, and ascend to heaven together. And may the Lord give you understanding to know and do his will in all things. The God of love and peace dwell with you, and bless you here, and finally receive you all home to his eternal kingdom of glory, for Jesus sake.

And now I close this address, by bidding you a long farewell ; hoping, that, by the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ, we may all, one day, have an infinitely happier meeting than we have ever had in this world of sin and sorrow, even at Christ’s right hand in Zion above ; being clothed upon with the spotless robe of His righteousness, to spend an eternity with saints and angels, in singing hallelujahs to the Triune God.—AMEN.

A
FUNERAL SERMON,

DELIVERED IN AMHERST,

SEPT. 12, 1815,

AT THE

INTERMENT

OF

DOCTOR SETH COLEMAN, A. M.


WHO DIED ON THE 9TH OF THE SAME MONTH,

AGED 76.

==
BY NATHAN PERKINS, JUN. A. M.

Pastor of the Second Church in Amherst.

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Published by Request.

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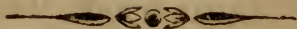
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Funeral Discourse.



PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. I. VERSE 21.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

THE great art of living, is to live so as to die well. For as there is a time to die; and as all know that this time will most assuredly arrive, so the great secret of life is, to be prepared to die. We fondly cling to life. Notwithstanding its numerous pains, perplexities and woes, life is sweet. It has so many pleasurable scenes, so many flattering prospects, and so many endearing connexions, that it strongly tempts us to desire its continuance. But the fashion of this world passeth away. These scenes must vanish, these prospects fail, these connexions be dissolved. Death will remove us from them at an everlasting distance. To discover the way to meet such an event with composure, to leave the world without anxiety, and the happiness it promises without regret, is the grand secret of living. To die well, is a condition desired by all. And various schemes have been formed, by mortal men, to effect this object. Philosophy has tried its utmost, and accomplished nothing.

The most it recommends is, a perfect insensibility to life and death. Pride advises to assume a manly fortitude. Infidelity soothes with the syren song, that "death is an eternal sleep." Under the influence of such counsellors, all we can attain to is, "like brutes to live, like brutes to die." How comfortless and unavailing, are the efforts and suggestions of men, on this subject! How far short do their discoveries fall, of teaching us to die well. But here Christianity steps in, and brings Immortality to light. This instructs us how to live and how to die. Indeed it has made a discovery of infinite importance to our dying race. It has taught us how to convert death into gain. By the votaries of the world, the sentiment, that "to die is gain," is accounted a paradox. For with them, to live is gain—to acquire fame is gain—to increase in wealth is gain—to revel in pleasure is gain; while to die is loss. But to the real Christian, the friend of God, and follower of the Lamb, the sentiment appears consistent with itself, worthy of the Gospel, and of practical importance.

St. Paul uttered it while under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and at a time when he was suffering bonds and imprisonment for the sake of the Gospel. Though he endured much for Christ, and though it was his work, his interest, his glory, to spread the Gospel, so that for him to live was Christ, yet to die was his greatest gain. This idea

gave unbounded consolation to this chief Apostle, during his multiplied sufferings. It constrained him to desire to depart and be with Christ. For it would be gain to him, to be freed from sorrow, affliction and sin, and to dwell where he should know, love, serve and enjoy his Redeemer better. Every believer who confides in the Son of God, as his hope, may derive support under the heaviest troubles from the same reflection, and adopt the language of Paul, and say, "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain."

In our meditations upon this text, on this funeral occasion, we shall attend to the two propositions it contains.

I. That to live is Christ.

II. That to die is gain, to the Believer.

And may God give us wisdom to understand the Scriptures; faith to embrace the Saviour; a heart to glory in the Cross; and grace so to live, as that it shall be Christ to us to live, and to die our everlasting gain.

We are FIRST to open the proposition, that for a believer to live is Christ. This proposition is equivalent to another of the Apostle's expressions; "I am crucified to the world; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Conscious of his guilt, of having forfeited the favour of God, and of having incurred the just displeasure of the Almighty, by his past disobedience, and present imperfections in duty; he declared that his hopes of

eternal life were built on Christ alone. So that, in view of his sinfulness, he was dead as to all expectation of future felicity as to himself; and he lived solely by a reliance on the Son of God, for the blessings of salvation. Thus Christ lived in him, and for him to live was Christ.

This implies that Christ is the fountain or source of spiritual life, in the hearts of his people. Naturally we are all spiritually dead. In a moral view, we resemble the dry bones which in vision, Ezekiel saw. We exhibit no symptoms of life. We have no spiritual breath, to breathe forth the feelings of devotion and praise—We have no spiritual flame to enkindle holy desires—no spiritual activity to engage us in the service of our Redeemer. This is the wretched condition of every child of Adam. This was once the case with the Apostle, which he confesses in language not to be misapprehended. “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” And in our unconverted state, it may be said of us all, “Ye have no life in you.” We may be alive in the service of the world; we may be alive to sin, but we are dead to holiness. It cannot be affirmed of us, therefore, that we live, until we are renewed; until the Spirit comes and breathes upon us, and thus quickens us to life. But of this spiritual life, Christ is the source. He provided for its existence in the soul. He sends the Spirit to communicate it. By the

agonies of the Cross, he obtained this Spirit. By his grace he commissions this Spirit to call forth the sinner from his death in sin. And through his mercy this life is imparted. Thus Christ is the author of eternal life to them that believe. Thus is it Christ for every believer to live. Hence the child of God, who once lay dead in sin, but now is raised to newness of life, by the Spirit, can say, "For me to live is Christ." For *me*, once a lost, depraved sinner; *guilty* before God, and deserving his righteous indignation—for *me*, who naturally drank in iniquity like water, who delighted in transgression, and even despised the name and blood of a Saviour—for *me*, who ought to perish, and to have no hope of life, no offer of mercy—for *me* to live is Christ.

Again, this declaration implies a dependence on Christ for the *continuance* of that life. The Lord Jesus is both the *Author* and *Finisher* of the Christian's faith. Through him spiritual life is first wrought in the soul, and by him that life is preserved. It is as necessary that it should be *supported*, as it is that it should be imparted. And the same power is requisite in the one case as in the other. For of himself, the believer is insufficient to think a good thought, or to perform a holy act. He cannot exercise the Christian graces, or maintain the Christian character. Left of God, he would instantly relapse into unbelief, and sin. He would desert from the standard of the Cross, and walk no more with Christ.

Of this the believer is conscious. He feels his weakness, his dependence, his constant liability to go astray, without his Saviour strengthens, supports and keeps him, For he is taught by his own experience, that he can feel no contrition for sin, no delight in duty, no regard for God's glory, no pleasing anticipations of joys to come, without the aid of Him who is the believer's life. On his righteousness and atonement, his blessing and grace, therefore, he continually relies. He depends on his Spirit which first communicated life, to perpetuate it. To the same Spirit he looks for assistance to animate his affections, to enkindle holy desires, to inspire with devotion, inflame his zeal, illuminate his mind, prompt him to spiritual activity, and to work in him whatever else is necessary to complete the Christian character, and to make him, as a man of God, perfect. Thus, for the believer to live is Christ, as it is Christ who continues and supports the life of faith in his soul.

This declaration implies also, a full surrendering of ourselves to Christ, to suffer his frowns for our sins, or tribulation for his sake; to obey his Gospel, and to promote his cause. In both of these respects, to live is Christ. It was on this account Paul made the assertion. He endured much for the sake of Christ, and he laboured much to advance his cause and interest. He suffered bonds, imprisonment, stripes, and the loss of all things, in the service of his Lord. The followers of the Lamb,

though not called to the same sufferings as the Apostle endured, yet are, like their Leader, often compelled to bear the Cross. They witness the inconstancy of professed friends; they are frequently desolate and afflicted; agonize under the hidings of God's face; weep at the graves of their Lazaruses, and are sharply tried with adverse events, and perplexing providences; yet they suffer justly, and often count it double honour to suffer, as it makes them resemble their Saviour more. Thus they are led to glory in the Cross. And for them to live in frequent sorrow, suffering and trial, is Christ.

So also, while they obey his Gospel, walk in submission to his authority, and conduct as if they were influenced by his example, they exhibit Christ as actually alive. They adorn the Gospel he revealed; they obey the law he honoured; they live the religion he taught and lived, and thus testify to the innocence and purity of his character. For them "to live, is Christ."

But while the Christian is thus concerned to honour his Saviour, by bearing his cross, and obeying his laws, he is by no means unsolicitous to promote his cause in the world. Having obtained mercy of the Lord, it is his first wish that the salvation of Christ may be known, and felt, by all mankind. His heart's desire is, that others may come and see the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He seeks, by every means in his power, to pro-

mote the purity, the peace, and enlargement of the Church; and to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, until it shall be universally established.

Thus the believer's sufferings and trials, his love and obedience, his desires and exertions to spread the Gospel, and to build up Zion, are a proof that for him to live is Christ.

These things are evidently implied in the declaration of the Apostle, that "for me to live is Christ." When the lives of God's people are of such a description, how is the religion of the Gospel recommended! Christ himself is set forth, in them, a living example to the world. He lives in them, and they live no longer to themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

When such are the state and conduct of the believer, that for him to live is Christ, he can with triumph say, For me "to die is gain." This is the

SECOND Proposition of the text, and a sort of inference from the first. For if the Christian who had been born again, and raised to newness of life, made Christ his joy and dependence, and could justly say, "Bondage to Christ is my liberty"—the smiles of my Saviour, my richest consolation—his acceptance of me, my reward—his Gospel, my rule—his Cross, my glory—the conversion of sinners, the peace of his people, and the welfare of his Church, my great object of concern; then he might add, though all this is quiet to my soul,

and affords a happiness which the world cannot give; yet to die is my greatest gain.—*What* is gain? *To die?* Oh, can it be gain to die; to quit life's scenes and pleasures; to be torn from all our earthly possessions, honours, enjoyments, and friendships? Will it be gain to the wealthy, to lose all in a moment? Can it be gain to the ambitious, to be suddenly wrested from his favourite pursuits and half accomplished plans? Can it be gain to the husband and wife, to have that endeared relation dissolved, which binds heart to heart?—or to the parent, to see the little rising plants stripped of the guide of their youth?—or to the minister, to leave his flock without a watchman to feed and guard them, and perhaps many of their souls unsafe? Yes, Oh Christian! if for thee to live is Christ, notwithstanding all these worldly attachments and interesting relations, it will be thy gain *to die*.

The *wealthy* shall find in heaven an immortal treasure, an exhaustless store of wealth, to enrich his soul for ever: and to die will be *his* gain. The *ambitious* will behold a boundless field for labour, in which he may give unlimited scope to his most enlarged desires, and where he will find rivals enough to vie with him in prosecuting plans of universal happiness, of honouring God, and of brightening his crown of immortal glory. *To die* will be *his* gain. The *husband and the wife*, the *parent and the child*, the *minister and his flock*, shall find, that in heaven there is a more inti-

mate and endearing relation; a fellow-citizenship with the saints; an alliance with the angels, and a joint-heirship with Christ, which shall swallow up, as no longer necessary, all earthly connexions; and in this new relation, their views and feelings will be perfectly one. The glory of God shall be their theme for contemplation—the praises of Immanuel, their perpetual song—and eternity, the duration of their union and their bliss. To die will be *their* gain.

But to die is a solemn and trying scene—Yet it is a scene which awaits us all. And when it seems to be loss in every respect, and loss irreparable: yet, through the Gospel of the grace of God, it is capable of being converted into gain. Let us then, for a moment, inquire in what respects it is gain for the *Christian* to die.

1st. It is gain to him, as it delivers him from the various pains, disappointments, and sufferings, to which, in the present life, he is exposed. Every believer has his sorrows and adversities, in common with other men. All are born to trouble. None, in any condition in life, are exempt. It is the part of human nature, in its fallen state, to suffer. Christians, like others, are exposed to endure their share of sorrows in this vale of tears. They are not freed from the frown of Providence, from disappointed expectations, from sickness, pain, and domestic losses and afflictions; but in this world, like the suffering family of man, they

shall have tribulation. As to outward things, one event happeneth to all, the righteous and the wicked. Christ came not to save his followers from temporal sufferings, but from the wrath to come. But in the midst of their sufferings, and often heavy calamities, he sustains them by his grace, with a support the world knows nothing of. Yet their sorrows never end till life is closed. Then their troubles terminate. Sorrow and sighing flee away. They rest from their labours. A full period is put to all their earthly woes. Never again will they be called to endure affliction, disappointment, pain, or sorrow. In this respect, death to the Believer is gain.

2dly. To die is gain to the Christian, as it delivers him from the remains of in-dwelling sin, and from all his spiritual troubles. Many are the trials and temptations of the Believer, in his journey to the City of the Living God. He has trouble to which the ungodly are strangers.

The conflict *within* is often sharp and threatening. Sin dwells with him. It easily and constantly besets him. It strives for dominion. It sometimes prevails, leads him captive, so that he cannot do the good that he desires, and he is compelled to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!" While thus maintaining a conflict within, he is violently attacked by enemies from without. An unbelieving world scoffs, reviles, ridicules, and persecutes. Often, his foes are those of his own household.

He sees his dearest connexions, whose welfare and eternal felicity lie near his heart, travelling thoughtlessly and undisturbedly down to everlasting ruin. He prays, he warns, he exhorts, with much long-suffering; but after all, he is constrained "to weep in secret places" for them; lest, through their pride and unbelief, they should be left to weep in places of endless sorrow. And then he looks around upon the ungodly, and unbelieving, every where making void the divine law, disregarding a Saviour's religion, and despising offered mercy, he cries out in deep concern, Oh that they were wise, that they understood these things, and would consider their latter end! These things are trials; but by grace he is supported, and by faith is made to rejoice in God. But the end of them does not arrive till at death he enters into his rest. *There* he is removed from all sin and imperfection. There his conflict with sin is over, his warfare with in-dwelling corruption is ended, and he enjoys a perpetual triumph. There the sinner and ungodly never appear, to disturb his repose, to interrupt his happiness, or to vilify the religion he has embraced, or the Saviour he worships. Surely, "if such deliverance be brought to the believer by death, to die must be *his gain*."

Lastly, to die is the Christian's gain, as it introduces him into the full fruition of all his long-anticipated joys. The Christian's treasure is in heaven. His purest joys are in the world to come. They are laid up for him at

the right hand of God : and he cannot take possession of them till death dissolves his connexion with the scenes of time. For it is through the gate of death that we pass into the kingdom of glory. There is no entrance into heaven except by crossing the shady valley of death, lying at the end of life's journey. Thro' this the Christian travels, often triumphing as he goes, and there sings what his Conqueror taught him, "Oh Death, where is thy sting?" Then, having passed it, he enters upon the full possession of those joys which *he* anticipated, and his Saviour promised—*Joys*, such as mortal eye had not seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived—*Joys* equal to the price at which they were purchased—*Joys* as unlimited as the most enlarged desires of immortal souls—*Joys* ever new, ever satisfying, ever increasing—*Joys* unspeakable, eternal, and full of glory.

What an acquisition is heaven! How immensely rich is he, whose treasure is there! How does the Christian advance his interest by dying! He exchanges sin for holiness—doubt for certainty—expectation for reality—sorrow for joy—mourning for praise—the world for Christ—and earth for heaven. Such an exchange was the hope of Paul; and such will be the actual gain of every one, who can truly say, "For me to live is Christ." It is for these reasons, that to the believer, death is gain.

From our subject, we learn the value of the Gospel. There alone immortality is brought

to light. There alone is a Saviour offered. There alone is a religion contained, which fortifies us against the alarms of death, and fits us for a happy eternity. Without the Gospel, death is armed with awful terrors; and all beyond the grave is enveloped in deep and perplexing obscurity. How valuable then is the Gospel, when it opens the way to the world of spirits, proclaims forgiveness, publishes the conditions of mercy, raises a hope that shall never make ashamed, quiets the soul in the hour of death, and points out the path to a blessed immortality! Its precious contents ought to be sacredly regarded by every candidate for eternity. Let us duly estimate it; and let us be of the number of those who embrace its Author, feed upon its promises, and follow its light; so that when the time of our departure arrives, we may say, "To die is gain."

In view of our subject, we see that Christ must be the only foundation of our hopes, and that the great purpose of our present existence is to have Christ live in us. "Other foundation can no man lay," &c. On no other can we safely build. All other dependences will fail us: They will disappoint us in the trying moment of death. Before the bar of God, they will be swept away as refuges of lies. Do we then build on him? Are we resting our souls on this Rock of ages? Are our affections fixed on him? Is he the joy, the hope, and the solace of our souls? Do we so embrace him,

so obey him, and so exert ourselves to bring others to accept of his salvation, and to enlarge his kingdom, as that we can say, For us "to live is Christ?" If not, our state is dangerous; our prospects in eternity, awfully alarming: for God has promised salvation to none who reject his Son. If this be our case, never, never can it be gain for us to die.

We observe once more from our subject, that it has taught us how to disarm death, and to turn it to our advantage. It is a thing of no trifling consequence, to die. To bid adieu to friends and connexions; to leave this world and every object dear to us in life; and to enter upon the untried scenes of eternity, is a most solemn and momentous change. To pass such a change, would seem to be attended with a loss of all things. But our subject has furnished us with singular, yet most valuable information, that to die may be not our loss, but our gain. When we trust in Christ, imbibe his spirit, and love his religion, he becomes our Conqueror in death; removes its sting, and gives us victory over it. Then death is disrobed of its terrors, and is made our gain; as it separates us from all our sins, our trials, our afflictions and earthly sorrows, and introduces us into a world of perfect purity, joy, and peace. Whatever can be felt by hearts burning with celestial love—whatever can be enjoyed by seeing Christ as he is, and in contemplating his unutterable glories—whatever can be expressed by tongues unloosed to celebrate

the great Redeemer's praises—in short, whatever heaven is, *that* death gives us in exchange for the mixed, transitory joys of time. All who live in Christ, and die in the Lord, shall thus be admitted into the everlasting gates of heaven, and thus be employed, and for ever find that to die is gain.

Propriety dictates that we give you, on this occasion, a concise history of the deceased, with some of the outlines of his religious character. DR. SETH COLEMAN was born at Hatfield, March 17th, 1740, old style. He received a public education, and graduated at Yale College in the year 1765. The same year he was married to Miss Sarah Beecher, a woman of distinguished piety, with whom he lived as a joint heir of the grace of life, 18 years. By her he had eight children, three of whom died in childhood; the remaining five are still living. Two years after her decease, he was married to her who now survives him. As a physician he was much esteemed, and constantly rode in his practice, till, in the course of the year 1813, he was visited with a paralytic shock, which disqualified him for the duties of active life, and left him the admonition that the earthly house of his tabernacle must ere long be dissolved. After this, he declined with a slow, but steady pace, till, on the 9th inst. he departed to the world of spirits, aged 76.

Descended from pious parents, he enjoyed the privileges of an early religious education, accompanied with a godly example, and many prayers. But these advantages were not attended with any saving effects, until the year 1761; when, while residing in Hadley, he passed, as he ever after hoped, that spiritual change, without which none can enter the kingdom of heaven. Nearly three years previous to this

time, he had united himself to the Church of Christ in this town. After he became a hopeful subject of divine grace, on the day of his arriving at the age of 21, he began a diary, which he always kept, while he was able to write. In the year 1785, he was elected a deacon in this Church,* an office which he sustained until he had finished his earthly course. In the remains of Dr. Coleman, we recognize the affectionate companion, the indulgent parent, the worthy citizen, the respectable physician, and an ornament to the Church of Christ. But death has dissolved all these relations---he is no more the husband, the father, or the friend. His work on earth is finished. May we not suppose that, if he now could address us, he would say, "For me to live was Christ, but to die is gain"?

You will indulge me a few moments, while I very briefly notice some of the most prominent traits in his religious character.

1st. In doctrine he was pure. His religion was of that genuine kind, which is founded on principle. He judged that a right belief was essential to a right practice. He adopted those articles of faith, which, by way of distinction, are denominated the doctrines of the Reformation. That "form of sound words," which he held fast, contained the Trinity in Unity, the sovereignty of God, the entire depravity of man, the necessity of divine influence to renew the heart, justification by faith in Christ, and the final perseverance of saints. These truths, he believed and loved. He felt their influence on his own heart, and deemed them to be of essential importance to others.

2dly. He sought to evince to the world the practical use of these doctrines, by his general deportment. Though he was by no means perfect, yet his great object was to live religion---to adorn the Christian profession---to recommend the Gospel, and to ex-

hibit to the world, by his example, what was the influence of truth on practice. How far he obtained his object, the recollection of his example will best prove. Much of his *good* may be evil spoken of, by the enemies of the cross; for *this* Christians are to expect, while they live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; but his general conduct was such as to show, that for him to live was Christ.

3dly. He was a man of prayer. He had great confidence in the efficacy of prayer, and he lived accordingly. No doubt is entertained by those who knew him best, but that he daily remembered his Saviour's injunction, "Enter thy closet, and pray to thy Father, who seeth in secret." His practice in his family, gave full demonstration, that he had resolved, like Joshua of old, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

4thly. He was faithful in giving religious instruction to his household. Their eternal salvation was his chief concern. He, indeed, watched for their souls. He opened to them the Scriptures, taught them the things of Christ, and then commended them to the grace of God. In this most reasonable service, he laboured not in vain. He had the satisfaction to see all of them, with their connexions, joining themselves to the household of faith, and one of them going forth in Christ's stead, beseeching sinners to become reconciled unto God.

5thly. He greatly delighted in the prosperity of Zion. He knew that the Gospel was the power of God to salvation. And he ardently desired to see it spread in the world, and make its triumph over the wickedness, the superstition, and the idolatry of mankind. Good news concerning its progress at home and abroad, was as refreshing to his heart, as the shadow of a great rock to a traveller in a weary land. He rejoiced at the success God had given to

Missionary efforts, and in the effusions of his Spirit to revive his cause. He felt it to be his happiness to bear of the goings of Christ in these days of Divine ingathering, to redeem Zion and to seal His chosen. With peculiar interest and satisfaction, he beheld the late revival of religion among us. And we trust, that after having enjoyed this spiritual harvest on earth, he has been gathered by the Lord of the harvest, to the heavenly garner, where he has brought his sheaf rejoicing.

Finally, the religion which, he embraced and loved, furnished him with support when the time of his departure drew near. He seemed ready to be offered. Calm and resigned, he patiently waited for the coming of his Lord. It was an expression he often used in his last days, that when he closed his eyes to sleep, it was of no concern to him, in which world he awoke. With this submission, and supporting hope, he fell asleep on Monday last, to awake in this world no more. Thus he believed, thus he lived, and thus he died. May we not say, For him to live was Christ, but to die is gain?

Permit me, before I close, to make an address to Mourners and others.

It is a source of unspeakable consolation to survivors, to hope death is gain to their departed friends. Such a source of consolation is afforded you, *Wid-
am*, who are now weeping over a departed husband. You will now recollect how sweet the counsel was, you often took together, and how long you came to this house of God in company. But death has closed these scenes. You mourn, but not without good hope, that what is lost to you, is infinite gain to him. Let this hope alleviate your sorrows, and compose your thoughts to peace. If for *him* to live was Christ, let it be *your* life also. Then, very shortly, your earthly pilgrimage will be ended—your trials be over

—your afflictions terminated, and *your* death a gain. Let not your soul be disquieted within you, but hope in God. *He* wounds, and he heals. *He* afflicts, and he consoles. To Him, therefore, we most cordially commend you. Cast your heavy burdens on the Lord; he shall maintain you. He styles himself the widow's God. Is not this enough to hush every rising murmur, and to wipe away every tear? Let the remnant of your days be spent in the service of God, and in watching for the coming of the Son of man. And may all your afflictions work out for you, an eternal weight of glory. Thus to die, will be your everlasting gain.

We will address a few words to the Children. Long have you enjoyed the counsel, the Christian example, and the prayers of him whose death you now lament. Peculiarly happy with him as a kind parent, you were blessed in him as a religious monitor. Next to Christ, perhaps you are most indebted to him for that hope of salvation, which you now entertain. He wrestled with God for you, and we trust he prevailed. He would often say, I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth. You well remember that happy, but solemn day, when, at three score years and ten, you were all together around him, and he, like the pious patriarch Jacob, gave you each an address and blessing. But his voice is silent; his counsel you will hear no more; his prayers are ended. Let his counsel, his example, and his prayers, long live in your remembrance. Though dead, may he yet speak to you. So far as for him to live was Christ, so far you are bound to walk in his steps. You confidently believe, that it was gain to him to die. Enquire whether it would be gain to you? Are you now prepared for death? If judgment were now to begin, could you leave the world without regret, and lift up your heads with joy, because your eternal redemption

draws nigh? If the Judge should now appear, and ask what has been your life, could you reply, that for us to live has been Christ? If so, then continue this Christian life; and when the time of your departure shall arrive, to die will be infinite gain.

My brethren of this Church; one of your number has now gone the way of all the earth. For many years the deceased was not only a member, but an officer, in the Church. His name is for a praise among you. Long did he distribute to you the memorials of a Saviour's death. But we trust he has gone to the General Assembly of the Church in heaven, where he will no more need elements to remind him of his Saviour, but where he will see him as he is, and be ever in his presence. None of you will continue, by reason of death. Let it be your care to live for Christ. When seats in the Church are made vacant, by deaths, pray that others may come and occupy their places, that Christ's house may be filled. Honour your profession by a holy walk with God; then, when ye fail, Christ will receive you into His everlasting habitations of rest and praise. Then to die will be your gain.

To close all; are there not some present in this Assembly, of whom it cannot be said, for them to live is Christ? If, my fellow-mortals, such be your condition; if Christ is not your Saviour; and for you to live is not Christ, but sin; a miserable end awaits you. At death you will suffer the loss of all things. Torn from your pleasurable pursuits, and from all you hold dear on earth, having made this world your all, there can be nothing in eternity for you to prize. Having no part with Christ below, you cannot receive Him as a portion above: But must be cast out as unprofitable servants, and for ever remain poor and destitute; having *nothing* to

feel but remorse, and suffering ; and *nothing* to inherit but indignation and wrath. How infinite your loss !—loss of peace—loss of happiness—loss of Christ. and loss of heaven ! Oh that men were wise, that they would consider their latter end ! May we all so improve Divine Providences, embrace the Saviour, and obey his Gospel, that we may say, For us to live is Christ, but to die is gain.

FINIS.





JUL 1 8 1945

